

WWW.TheMeetingMagazines.com

# CORPORATE & INCENTIVE TRAVEL

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE TRAVEL PLANNERS



## Orlando

'Where There's Something  
New Every Year'

PAGE 30

## It's Crunch Time

How Medical Meeting Planners Are Managing New  
Roles and Regulations Under the Sunshine Act

PAGE 22

## Eureka!

Discover Meetings  
Gold in California

PAGE 40

**CLICK HERE TO  
DOWNLOAD/VIEW  
TABLET VERSION**

**George Aguel**  
President and CEO  
Visit Orlando

**Budgeting**  
PAGE 10

**Generational Diversity**  
PAGE 16

**F&B Trends**  
PAGE 26



# AT THE HIGHEST POINT

MÉXICO THE MEETING POINT

More than 50 International Airports /  
Premium Services / World-Class venues.

**México**

LIVE IT TO BELIEVE IT  
visitmexico.com/meetings

México City

ISSN 0739-1587

USPS 716-450

## Contents

VOLUME 32 NO. 4

APRIL 2014

### FEATURES

#### 10 Navigating Wisely

How Savvy Planners Sail Through a Seller's Market

By Stella Johnson

#### 16 Our Changing Ways

How Generational and Cultural Diversity  
Issues Impact Meetings

By John Buchanan

#### 22 It's Crunch Time

How Medical Meeting Planners Are Managing New  
Roles and Regulations Under the Sunshine Act

By Gabi Logan

#### 26 F&B Trends: A Full Plate

Planners Must Balance Food Trends and Tastes  
Along With Dietary, and Budgetary, Restrictions

By Stella Johnson

### DESTINATIONS

#### 30 Orlando

'Where There's Something New Every Year'

By Derek Reveron

#### 40 Eureka!

Discover Meetings Gold in California

By Karen Brost

### DEPARTMENTS

#### 4 Publisher's Message

#### 6 News & Notes

#### 7 Snapshots

#### 8 Perspective The Real Rules of Attendee Engagement By Andy Johnston

#### 50 People on the Move

#### 50 Reader Services



"I love what you've done with the  
budget friendly meeting room."

Even though the economy is improving, a seller's market and  
intensified budget scrutiny are taxing planners. **PAGE 10**



The farm-to-table trend cultivates not only more flavorful,  
healthful menus, but environmental responsibility, too. **PAGE 26**



The Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Coast, CA, exemplifies the  
Golden State's scenic allure. **PAGE 40**

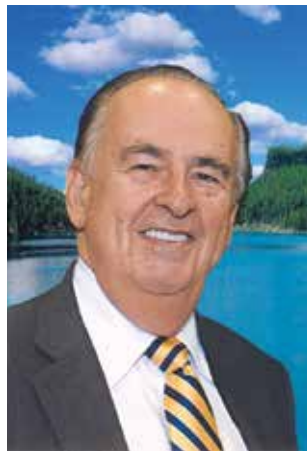
Corporate & Incentive Travel (USPS 716-450) is published monthly by Coastal Communications Corporation, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394; 561-989-0600. Single copies \$12.00 U.S.A. only. Yearly subscription price is \$125.00 in the U.S.A.; Canada and foreign is \$165.00. Back copies \$14.00 U.S.A. only. Distributed without charge to qualified personnel. Periodicals Postage Paid at Boca Raton, FL, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Corporate & Incentive Travel, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394. Nothing contained in this publication shall constitute an endorsement by Coastal Communications Corporation (Corporate & Incentive Travel), and the publication disclaims any liability with respect to the use of or reliance on any such information. The information contained in this publication is in no way to be construed as a recommendation by C&IT of any industry standard, or as a recommendation of any kind to be adopted, by or to be binding upon, any corporate/incentive travel planner or agent. Reproduction of any portion of this publication by any means is strictly forbidden. Editorial contributions must be accompanied by return postage and will be handled with reasonable care. However, the publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited photographs or manuscripts. Subscribers: Send subscription inquiries and address changes to: Circulation Department, Corporate & Incentive Travel, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394. Provide old and new addresses including zip codes. Enclose address label from most recent issue and please allow five weeks for the change to become effective. Printed in U.S.A. © 2014



# Publisher's Message

## Record-Breakers

I wish I had a dollar every time I saw the phrase “record-breaking” in a news release these days. It’s welcome news, too, as events the world over experience record-breaking attendance. Destinations are celebrating record-breaking feats, too. Las Vegas was named the No. 1 trade show destination for the 20th consecutive year, and then there is Orlando’s news. George Aguel, the president and CEO of Visit Orlando, proudly announced early this month from the stage at U.S.



Travel Association’s IPW in Chicago that Orlando welcomed 59 million visitors in 2013, setting an all-time record for U.S. destinations and a 3 percent increase over the 2012 milestone. Fittingly, Orlando will host the IPW in 2015.

One would be hard-pressed to find a savvy meeting planner who isn’t keen on staging meetings in Orlando — a destination that offers something new every year, has great value, and boasts built-in entertainment opportunities and fun for the entire family. Jeff Storley is one of them. In our cover story on Orlando on page 30, Storley, manager of commercial events for Rockwell Automation, brings his event often to Loews Royal Pacific Resort at Universal Orlando, because, among other features, he says that it is an “awesome value.” “We are very budget-conscious,” he says, “and they help us to make sure we manage our budget to the letter. We feel we get great value.”

When it’s time for you to acknowledge those hotels and resorts that consistently deliver great service and value, remember to vote for them in our award programs. The deadline has passed for our 30th Annual Awards of Excellence, but it’s not too late to cast your ballot for *Corporate & Incentive Travel* magazine’s Greens of Distinction awards. The ballot is available on our website [www.themeetingmagazines.com](http://www.themeetingmagazines.com). Seize this opportunity to recognize those outstanding golf hotels, resorts and conference centers that have this past year demonstrated their overall commitment to hospitality excellence and effectively hosted your meetings and incentive travel programs. Then, you also can check out up-to-date industry news and features on our brand new adaptive website — designed for easy use on a desktop, tablet or mobile device. Our feature articles, destination reports and perspective columns are organized so it’s easier and faster to search and find exactly what you need to do your job in a more efficient and timely manner.

Harvey Grotsky  
Publisher

## www.TheMeetingMagazines.com CORPORATE & INCENTIVE TRAVEL

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
**Harvey Grotsky**  
[harvey.grotsky@themeetingmagazines.com](mailto:harvey.grotsky@themeetingmagazines.com)

CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
**Mitch D. Miller**  
[mitch.miller@themeetingmagazines.com](mailto:mitch.miller@themeetingmagazines.com)

MANAGING EDITORS  
**Susan W. Fell**  
[susan.fell@themeetingmagazines.com](mailto:susan.fell@themeetingmagazines.com)

**Susan S. Gregg**  
[sue.gregg@themeetingmagazines.com](mailto:sue.gregg@themeetingmagazines.com)

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS  
**Karen Brost**  
**John Buchanan**  
**Gabi Logan**  
**Christine Loomis**  
**Derek Reveron**  
**Patrick Simms**

PRESIDENT & CEO  
**Harvey Grotsky**

VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS  
**David A. Middlebrook**  
[david.middlebrook@themeetingmagazines.com](mailto:david.middlebrook@themeetingmagazines.com)

ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES  
2700 N. Military Trail, Suite 120  
Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394  
561-989-0600 Fax: 561-989-9509  
[advertising@themeetingmagazines.com](mailto:advertising@themeetingmagazines.com)

CT, DC, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT  
**David Middlebrook**  
561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509  
[david.middlebrook@themeetingmagazines.com](mailto:david.middlebrook@themeetingmagazines.com)

FLORIDA/CARIBBEAN/BAHAMAS  
**David Middlebrook**  
561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509  
[david.middlebrook@themeetingmagazines.com](mailto:david.middlebrook@themeetingmagazines.com)

AL, AR, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX  
**Hutson Lambert**  
228-452-9683 • Fax: 866-419-9580  
[hlambert@airmail.net](mailto:hlambert@airmail.net)

CO, IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO  
ND, NE, OH, SD, VA, WI, WV  
**Michael D. Stack**  
847-367-7120 • Fax: 847-276-3421  
[michaeldstack@aol.com](mailto:michaeldstack@aol.com)

AZ, CA, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY  
**Marshall Rubin**  
818-888-2407 • Fax: 818-888-4907  
[mrubin@westworld.com](mailto:mrubin@westworld.com)

ALASKA/CANADA/MEXICO/INTERNATIONAL  
**David Middlebrook**  
561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509  
[david.middlebrook@themeetingmagazines.com](mailto:david.middlebrook@themeetingmagazines.com)



## TROPICAL INCENTIVES

In Australia's Top End

Think you’ve seen everything Australia has to offer? If you’re yet to visit Darwin and Australia’s Top End then you certainly haven’t. This tropical wonderland is full to the brim with quality dining, exceptional accommodation, and amazing nature-based experiences. Give your delegates an experience they’ll never forget.

### DELIVER THE WOW FACTOR

#### DAY 1:

Arrive in Darwin in the tropical “Top End” of the Northern Territory and check-in to the city’s newest five-star villa-style resort, SKYCITY, spectacularly set amongst tropical beachside gardens. Enjoy a leisurely afternoon around the lush tropical lagoon with its swim-up bar before indulging in a luxury spa treatment. Alternatively, take an escorted walking tour of Darwin with a local Indigenous guide. Include a visit to the famous Mindil Beach Sunset Markets to experience more than 250 stalls offering exotic foods, as well as an amazing array of handmade craft, crocodile products, Indigenous art and unique jewellery. A special dining area set aside exclusively for your group provides a tantalising view of a breathtaking tropical Northern Territory sunset over the water.

#### DAY 2:

Start the day with a scenic flight over the pristine Kakadu National Park wilderness. Upon landing, a chauffeured 4WD vehicle awaits to provide your transfer to one of the Territory’s renowned wilderness lodges, where you will stay for the evening. A fascinating rock art excursion en-route to the lodge provides a break in the two hour journey before arrival at the lodge, where you will get a chance to experience the abundant wildlife of the seasonal floodplain - crocodiles, buffalo, hundreds of species of birds and other amazing Top End creatures.

A range of activities are on offer to keep the day full of new adventures: for outdoor activities, try quad-biking, hiking or fishing. Alternatively, join a cooking class or simply laze by the infinity pool for the ultimate in relaxation. Dinner is a degustation feast featuring Territory specialties such as prime beef and the renowned Barramundi fish, with exotic bush-tucker touches.

#### DAY 3:

Start the day with a spectacular sunrise wetlands cruise on the calm waters of the nearby ‘billabong’ followed by a gourmet breakfast. Spend the morning enjoying a cultural walk to the edge of the wetlands, sampling a ‘bush tucker’ morning tea and gaining insights into an ancient culture, accompanied by your Indigenous guide.

After transferring back to Darwin, a light lunch is served at a location overlooking the sparkling waters of the Arafura Sea. Following lunch, you will have an opportunity to browse through Darwin’s high-end boutiques where a range of unique, luxury goods including pearls and designer crocodile-skin accessories can be considered for take-home gifts and mementos. A private transfer takes you to the airport for your return flight home.

Optional activities in the Top End include extended exploration of the rich culture and pristine wilderness of Kakadu and Lichfield National Parks, staying in a unique crocodile shaped hotel, and cruising the world-renowned Yellow Water Billabong.

For those who have more time you might like to combine your Top End experience with a visit to Uluru (Ayers Rock), the true heart of Australia.

### START PLANNING NOW

Find more itineraries and pitching resources at [businessevents.australia.com](http://businessevents.australia.com). For more information, contact Samantha Holmes, Business Events Executive for the Americas, at Tourism Australia on [sholmes@tourism.australia.com](mailto:sholmes@tourism.australia.com) or +1 310 695 3207.

### GETTING THERE

Daily flights operate from the USA to Sydney and Brisbane, with excellent connections to Darwin and the Northern Territory.







## Orlando Welcomes 59 Million Visitors in 2013, Setting All-Time U.S. Record

ORLANDO, FL — Visit Orlando President and CEO George Aguel announced that Orlando welcomed 59 million visitors in calendar year 2013, setting an all-time record for United States destinations. The total of 59 million visitors represents a 3 percent increase over the previous milestone set in 2012.

"We are so pleased to announce this incredibly exciting news on the closing day of IPW 2014, when travel industry professionals around the world shift their sights toward next year's IPW event in Orlando," said Aguel. "Thanks to the strong global marketing and sales efforts of our team at Visit Orlando and the leadership of our tourism members and community leaders who share a common vision for our destination, Orlando continues to lead the nation as its most visited destination."

Orlando is experiencing one of the most significant expansion periods in the destination's history as a variety of additional attractions and enhancements to the popular retail, dining and entertainment districts are underway. By 2017, Orlando will be among the first destinations with on-airport intermodal facilities in the U.S., which will conveniently support air travel, ground transportation and rail. [www.visitorlando.com](http://www.visitorlando.com)

## Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort Opens

ORLANDO, FL — Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort officially opened its doors March 31. The new value and moderately priced property is the fourth onsite hotel at Universal Orlando Resort in Orlando, FL, and evokes the classic, retro-feel of iconic beach resorts from the 1950s and '60s.



When complete, Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort will feature a total of 1,800 rooms — 900 family suites and 900 standard guest rooms.

Family suites sleep up to six people. Cabana Bay guests enjoy benefits including Early Park Admission to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter one hour before the theme park opens.

Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort is co-owned and managed by Loews Hotels & Resorts. [www.universalorlando.com](http://www.universalorlando.com)

## Florida Meeting Services joins Global DMC Partners

ORLANDO, FL — Stuart J. Gardner, president and owner of Florida Meeting Services with offices in Fort Lauderdale



GARDNER

and Orlando, announced that his company is the official, exclusive DMC Member of Global DMC Partners serving the entire state of Florida, effective March 15, 2014. Gardner stated, "We are extremely excited about this relationship, as it brings together many of our peers from around the world with like-minded philosophies of delivering outstanding DMC experiences for our customers."

Stuart J. Gardner and Associates Inc., a Florida corporation doing business as Florida Meeting Services, has operated in Florida as a destination management source since 1985. Gardner has served on statewide tourism boards and is a member of Site, MPI, SKAL and ADME.

Global DMC Partners is a global network of independent destination management companies and sales advisors, offering planners worldwide solutions to their destination management needs. Global DMC Partners has exclusive partnerships with more than 50 DMCs representing 51 destinations in The Americas and Caribbean, eight destinations in Africa and the Middle East, 26 destinations in Europe and 16 destinations in Asia and the South Pacific. Global DMC Partners represents more than 100 destinations worldwide. [www.floridameetingservices.com](http://www.floridameetingservices.com)

# Snapshots



1



2



3



4



5



6

**1** The Minnesota Chapter of the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMIAI) was named the 2013 Chapter of the Year at the annual HSMIAI Mike Leven Leadership Conference in Las Vegas. **2** Visit Orlando and members hosted a Meeting Planner Familiarization during the Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill Club & Lodge in March. On tap were (l to r) Ken Barnett, director of strategic partnerships for Visit Orlando; Jason Hickman; Terry Manion, V.P., Meridian Incentive Consultants and Brett Fair, business development — N.A. Meridian Incentive Consultants. **3** At the 33rd IACC-Americas Annual Conference near Los Angeles in March, attendees were "entertained" by (l to r) President of IACC-Americas and Dolce Hotels & Resorts General Manager TJ Fimmano; Dolce Hotels & Resorts V.P. of Conference Centers Paul Dolce; Benchmark Hospitality International President & CEO Alex Cabanas; FLIK International S.V.P. Hotels & Conference Centers Neil Gardner; and Sodexo V.P. Operations Sean Anderson. **4** San Francisco Travel's Washington, DC, team enjoyed a night of San Francisco flavors with clients at a reception in Bethesda, MD. **5** The colorful booth of exhibitor Kazakhstan at the Gulf Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings (GIBTM) held in Abu Dhabi in March. **6** The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Mexico hosted its annual GBTA Mexico Conference 2014 at the World Trade Center in Mexico City. A record number of 350+ business travel professionals from Mexico, the U.S. and Latin America registered for the event.



By Andy Johnston

## The Real Rules of Attendee Engagement

**E**ngagement is just a big word for “making people like us.” That’s what we want to do at every event, convention and conference. We look at the attendees, analyze and research them in hopes of uncovering their secret needs, and then do everything we can to make them like our event experiences.

But you can’t make anyone like your event experience. You have to give them reasons to like the event and then help them do it. That, boys and girls, is the art of “attendee engagement.”

And here is its biggest challenge: There is no such thing as passive engagement. Engagement requires action. You have to give people the time, location, encouragement and permission to interact in ways that are valuable to them.

### But How?

Unfortunately, the basic idea of engagement has mutated like a movie alien into a hot, new business buzzword and an event industry cliché. You know the list:

Attendee engagement, audience engagement, employee engagement, client engagement, customer engagement, engagement marketing, engagement design, engagement analysis, engagement modeling, statistical engagement lifecycle...it sounds like the options at a very bad speed-dating party. To get to the heart of engagement, you have to forget the analytics, statistics and psychology, and focus on what is actually important.

### Engagement Is a Relationship

It’s involvement, commitment and personalization. It’s a relationship about a specific topic for a set period of time. People are engaged *about* something or *in* something that interests them. It may be a topic, skill, controversy, decision or a benefit, but it is something personal to that particular audience.

### Building Engagement

To build engagement you need to:

**Encourage it**  
**Empower it**  
**Motivate it**

Just giving an audience the opportunity won’t work. Engaging someone isn’t a reaction or a programmed interaction. It has a beginning, middle and, hopefully, no end.

### Encouraging Engagement

The typical presentation or workshop is 45 minutes long, and the average adult can only pay attention for about 20 minutes. So take a look at your agenda and content. If it’s a continuous flow of data, details, PowerPoint slides and speakers — then you have very, very little engagement. Tossing in a couple of videos or a simple game won’t help.

To encourage engagement, give people valid reasons to talk, interact and participate in activities that are relevant to them. A game, activity or a competition isn’t engagement unless there is a point. Be sure you explain the reason, point and benefits when you ask attendees to become involved with the information and each other.

### Empowering Engagement

Engagement comes from the audience and not from the front of the room. You can empower it by recognizing that you don’t have a single audience. In reality, you have all sorts of smaller groups who share some common interests and needs. So empower engagement with some audience segmentation. Take a close look at the needs and desires of the major groups.

Learn these four key things:

1. How do they want to be engaged?
2. What is the most effective way to communicate with them?
3. Who is the best or most acceptable person to work with them?
4. How are they different or unique?

### Motivating Engagement

Remember, we said that people are engaged *about* something or *in* something that interests them. So you have to target the experiences to each group. Every person wants to engage on her/his terms. Give them relevant content and personal experiences that they can use immediately. Here’s how you motivate them.

- Clearly define the audience groups and make sure attendees understand how they fit in.
- Involve people in activities, discussions or some type of interaction so they can relate to the subject on a personal level.
- Give them a sense of purpose, control and value.

- Put them in the middle of the relationship as a participant and not a spectator.
- Make the engagement emotional and personal.

### The Real Rules of Engagement

Successful engagement is a three-way relationship: organizers and presenters to the attendees; the attendees to the organizers and presenters; and attendee to attendee. To make the most of that conversation, try following these rules.

- 1 **Populate your events with interesting people.** Get the influencers and experts out of the general sessions and into the breakouts, workshops and trade shows.
- 2 **Shake up the content.** Get the audience out of their comfort zones and surprise them with information they haven’t heard before.
- 3 **Look at the event as a whole.** If every part of the agenda has the same style, then tear it apart and rebuild it. Change a few session formats, add discussions, target groups, roundtables, etc. Mix things up! If it’s predictable, it isn’t engaging.
- 4 **Build in legitimate networking opportunities.** Give groups of like-minded people a time, a place and something relevant to talk about, and you will trigger more powerful engagement.
- 5 **Give attendees things to do that relate to your event goals.** Random activities aren’t engagement. Just attending isn’t involvement. Make sure you create activities that support both the content and what attendees need from it.
- 6 **Plan, promise and communicate in advance how people will have opportunities to engage.** Then deliver on your promise. In addition to firing up the audience, you’ll increase attendance.

### Engage Early and Often

It should be no secret that attendee engagement doesn’t begin when people enter the room. It begins the day you announce the event. Start engaging attendees as a part of your marketing. Hey, emails are cheap.

Give attendees something to do when you first invite them. Communicate with specific audience groups. Ask them questions, send a survey and begin the conversation. It’s much more effective to continue and grow a conversation at an event than to try to start one.

The more you involve attendees early, the more they will understand who you are, what you’re telling them and why they should care about the event. Instead of a list of topics, sessions and workshops, they’ll see valuable opportunities they won’t want to miss.

### The Bottom Line

In the end, the goal of engagement is for all of your attendees to want to know, understand and discover more — together.

You can achieve it only if you view attendees as a collection of individuals and not as statistics, demographics and headcounts. Having valuable content is vital. How your audiences get involved with the content and with people who share common interests is engagement. Make engagement a part of your planning and you’ll develop events, conventions and conferences that people will enjoy and want to attend. And — you’ll make them *like* you. **C&IT**

“The goal of engagement is for all of your attendees to want to **know, understand and discover** more together.”



### Andy Johnston

is president and creative director of The Idea Group and is a sought-after industry expert in developing ingenious ways to engage and motivate audiences. Andy has deep expertise in strategic planning, messaging, creative direction, marketing and events. He can be reached at andy@ideagroupatlanta.com or 404-213-4416.



# Navigating Wisely

## How Savvy Planners Sail Through a Seller's Market

By Stella Johnson

**D**ue to a strengthening economy, many companies and organizations are hard at work launching new products, hosting challenging sales incentive programs, training additional staff and managerial crew, and setting new goals, objectives and five-year plans for the future.

There's no better way to do that, of course, than to meet face-to-face at a premier downtown meeting hotel or golf and spa resort, near or far.

While one might expect budget belts to be somewhat loosened as more business is conducted and more meetings are scheduled, however, "it ain't necessarily so" as the old song claims.

That's because nowadays the budgeting process is more complex. Planners are more entrenched in strategic meetings management, and therefore more concerned about return on investment and meeting business goals than they are about just event costs.

At least that's the new spin on budgeting these days, a lesson that was sorely learned by meeting planners after the financial crisis of 2008. Today, more than ever, planners are severely challenged by the resurgent seller's market.

### The Market Now

It's a sobering fact but the reality is that when the economy is down, planners will find a friendlier marketplace on the supplier side of the industry but, when it's on the uptick, as it is now, not so much.

And, as to whether there exists a buyer's or seller's market, some planners are on the fence about it. Take Glenna Fulks, assistant director of corporate events at the Trevoze, PA-based Advertising Specialty Institute. In an interview late last fall, Fulks described her situation:

"We have a network of 25,000 distributors and suppliers throughout North America, and we host five national trade shows in metropolitan areas each year, along with a stream of other corporate events. From my experience, all indicators show that meetings are back up but, with that said, so is a tougher marketplace in which planners must operate.

"Sure, there are always pockets of opportunity out there like in Las Vegas. While it appears to be back to its old glory days, especially if you're trying to book a meeting Wednesday through Saturday, send them an RFP for a meeting that begins with a room block on

a Sunday night, and they will jump through hoops to be the first to answer you and give you the deal of a lifetime — assuming, of course, that they don't have a citywide convention loading in over the weekend," she says.

"So, seller's versus buyer's market? My answer to this would be that the shift appears to indicate that it's more of a seller's market Wednesday to Saturday with fewer concessions avail-

able to the buyer. There are still deals out there, however, and there is still some open territory when the two parties can meet in the middle and strike a decent deal for both sides. But during a shoulder season and for a meeting that arrives on Sunday and departs on Tuesday, I see it as being very much a buyer's market."

But, have no fear. According to Fulks, hotels learned something back in 2009

and 2010, especially if multi-year contracts are a possibility.

"There are enough veterans out there who know that the lean times could come again, just like they did at the end of 2008 and into 2009," she says. "And it's better to be prepared and have a little cushion than to fly by the seat of your pants and pretend that the air will never again be let out of the balloon. On the flip side of that analogy, however, there

are smart meeting planners who did not take undue advantage of hoteliers during the lean years but partnered with them instead, so there is a good deal of mutual understanding and respect that was built and, conveniently enough, can now be collected on."

Since 2013, however, Fulks strongly believes that even with the fiscal-cliff scare and the potential of the economy taking another hit, things in the hospi-





# Budgeting Basics

Glenna Fulks, assistant director of corporate events at the Trevose, PA-based Advertising Specialty Institute, joined us for a brief Q&A.

## C&IT What is the most important part of the budget?

**Fulks** The first thing I look at is food and beverage, especially if I'm hosting a large reception and dinner combination. In the process of negotiating concessions, I always ask for a discount on the food and beverage so that I have a little something extra up my sleeve. If I save some money on the overall menu then, perhaps, I can spend the savings on upgraded wines. And, if I know that the group tends not to rush down in the morning and load up on a heavy breakfast, then I don't plan for waffle and omelet stations.

## C&IT How do you budget for offsite events, which tend to be more expensive?

**Fulks** When I book offsite activities and entertainment, I investigate whether I can partner with a local DMC. The ears of vendors perk up when you start talking about bundling opportunities because they suddenly realize you're not just a one-shot deal, over and done and never to pass this way again. The smart meeting planner opens these doors and, conversely, the smart DMC listens and then spreads the word to area venues. I ask for proposals and quotes on everything, and then I see where I can save and where it will be necessary for me to spend a little more.

## C&IT How was your last meeting budgeted?

**Fulks** I started with the number of people who had attended the last event and then looked at the group history of food and beverage, as well as room block and activities. I come up with a per-person total cost and then go back to the bargaining table with options that I think will lower that cost. Then, I began to fine-tune the menus and activities with options that run from a three-course to a four-course plated dinner, or a buffet with serve-yourself stations, or special chef-attended stations.

## C&IT Is there any particular complexity in your corporate budget that is not part of the norm?

**Fulks** Yes, I happen to work for a company that does not believe in the "here's the total budget," but rather they tell you specifically the budgets for food and beverage activities, speaker fees, room charges and so on that you have to work with. And, if you save in one category, that doesn't mean you can apply the savings and spend more on something else. You have to stay inside the categories. The example I used of saving on food to spend more on upgraded wines is realistic, because I stay inside the food and beverage budget.

## C&IT What is your overall No. 1 tip for cost-effectiveness?

**Fulks** Not to sound like a broken record, but wherever and whenever possible, partner with a company you know, and your budgeting will be easier and less stressful.

— SJ

tality industry seem somewhat stable. "Hotels are cautiously expecting to increase and build on their rates over the next few years — to get back to where they were in 2008 before the last financial disaster," she says.

Gail Schuster, village gatherings director for DaVita, the dialysis division of DaVita HealthCare Partners Inc., a Fortune 500 company located in Denver, CO, agrees with Fulks' assessment of the meetings marketplace and makes another interesting observation.

Schuster says, "The meetings industry is on the upswing, and I do believe it is a sellers' market, even so, the sellers' increases have far outpaced the meetings industry upswing. Yes, the method of budgeting has remained the same, for us anyway, however, the percentage of our 'spend' has changed. Five years ago, we were able to negotiate inexpensive hotel rates and added concessions. Today, the hotel expenses have increased, yet our overall event budgets have not."

## Money Isn't Everything

Again, when budgeting for corporate meetings and events, money isn't everything. One New York-based meeting planner of a large publishing company claims that "saving money on meetings doesn't mean anything if you don't get the expected outcome. Today, budgeting for meetings is more about ROI — and not just that but, now, ROO (Return on Objective) as well."

She says that what has changed for her company, an aviation leader that regularly hosts major industrial events, are its marketing strategies. "Instead of blindly mailing and emailing material to promote exhibitions, trade shows and other events, we are seriously testing markets now and looking more closely at the demographics we want and need at the events to make them a success, which, in turn, leads to increased business and expansion — our objectives — or ROO," she points out.

"For instance, we now look at who was on the attendee list and the potential ROI that each attendee brought to play. If a CEO cancelled their attendance and

replaced it with a director, then there is scrutiny as to whether that director can bring the same weight as what his CEO would have contributed to the event. Certain events are marketed and targeted towards the very top echelon of attendee, while other events are not. So, the budget is weighted."

Billy Bauer, marketing director at Royce Leather, Secaucus, NJ, underscores the importance of ROI and ROO, the new wrench in a meeting planner's tool box. He says that he has been facing increasing pressure from management to clearly demonstrate the financial return on investment of staff development and encouragement initiatives.

"We hold conferences twice a year at our corporate headquarters in New Jersey, once in July and once at the end of December. During that time we fly in all of our regional sales managers, IT and logistics people and distribution center

employees from around the world to either hype them up for the second half of the year, or thank and celebrate them after another successful year," Bauer says. "To save costs, we host these conferences onsite as we have a gorgeous plot of land around our main U.S.

save money on speakers, vendors and suppliers also by booking well over a year in advance for each event."

Furthermore, Bauer notes that while it is sometimes difficult to demonstrate the ROI on human capital management initiatives, the company generally tries to measure it by collecting "happy



Glenna Fulks, Assistant Director of Corporate Events Advertising Specialty Institute, Trevose, PA

*"It is so much easier to do business with someone with whom you have a relationship. They will go the extra mile for you and vice versa."*

distribution center so we have a big picnic in the summer, and then in the winter we transform our massive showroom into a gala area. We also know the exact dates and times of these events, as we have been doing them for a long time, so everyone is on the same page from a coordination perspective; therefore we

sheets" premised on employee feedback.

"But now, this is a fairly light touch, which is no longer sufficient to satisfy the CEO," he observes. "Today's economic climate is forcing marketing and human resource executives to demonstrate that their talent development initiatives justify the meeting investment

AN ICONIC RESORT  
REMARKABLY REFRESHED

Experience our \$35 million resort-wide rejuvenation. Each of our 487 rooms along with the 60,000 square feet of conference space have been completely and beautifully upgraded with the newest signature touches from Westin for a new level of luxury in Tucson. Rated #1 for business travels in Tucson, plus awarded the highest MPSI score in the region.

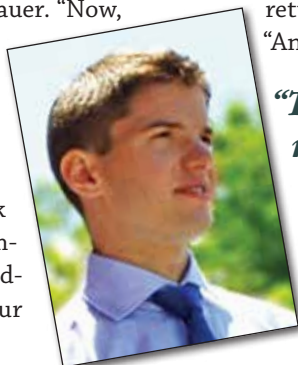
Call 1.800.677.6338 for details and visit [westinlapalomaresort.com](http://westinlapalomaresort.com).

spg.  
Starwood  
Preferred  
Guest

THE WESTIN  
LA PALOMA  
RESORT & SPA  
TUCSON



by using convincing metrics, which indicate a substantial monetary ROI and ROO. Flimsy estimates of impressions and reach are now unacceptable forms of reporting,” notes Bauer. “Now, every hashtag of information is not only available, but also immediately collectible, quantifiable and deliverable. Because anyone can potentially double-check your wrap report facts, it’s important to use reliable third-party tools to back up your ROI/ROO claims.



*“Today’s economic climate is forcing marketing...executives to demonstrate that their talent development initiatives justify the meeting investment by using convincing metrics, which indicate a substantial monetary ROI and ROO.”*

**Billy Bauer, Marketing Director**  
Royce Leather, Secaucus, NJ

“Many of the social monitoring and analyzing tools that are out there now, such as RowFeeder and Klout, require setup prior to the event for comprehensive results, so be sure to set these up as part of the budget and have them in motion as soon as you’ve created that event hashtag.”

### When Money Does Matter

While planners must be more artful in crafting their budget than ever before, especially in regard to ROI and ROO, keeping an eye on the bottom line is always a concern. To accomplish that, planners must be creative and Schuster notes that a good rule to follow is “no one category should exceed 30 percent of the total budget.”

In addition, Fulks reminds us that

*“Five years ago, we were able to negotiate inexpensive hotel rates and added concessions. Today, the hotel expenses have increased, yet our overall event budgets have not.”*

**Gail Schuster, Village Gatherings Director**  
DaVita HealthCare Inc., Denver, CO

during the financial crisis of 2008 and beyond there were a number of hotels that created money-saving initiatives for corporate planners. “I’m talking about rebates back to the master account if a certain threshold of spending was achieved, or offering guest room Internet connectivity into the overall room rate and so on. I remember saying

willing to discount their rate as well as throw in concessions that will add up to cost savings.

**Thinking local.** Hotels like to showcase their area, so play up what the area is known for. For example, if you’re meeting in Atlanta, consider serving pickled watermelon or fried green tomatoes.

room Internet connectivity has become pretty standard now — especially if you ask for it as a concession on your RFP, and the same with the rebate back to the master account. Hoteliers were the ones who opened that box and conditioned their customers to expect it.”

### Money Saving Tips

Everyone the world over loves saving money, and meeting planners are no different. Consider these time-honored, money-saving tips from savvy planners:

**Day of arrival.** Many hotels sit empty on Sunday night. If you can put “heads in beds,” they are going to be more



**Sharing.** Find out what kind of audio-visual setup the group before you is using and work out an arrangement to use all or part of it to save setup costs.

**Concessions.** Don’t be afraid to ask, because you have no idea what the hotel

may agree to. They may offer to meet you halfway.

If you ask for a 10 percent discount on F&B and the hotel declines, ask if they will consider designing a per-person menu around a set price; or if they will agree to allow you to use the 2013 menu pricing, even if the meeting is in 2014, as long as you sign by the end of the month.

**Rebates.** Ask the hotel if they will consider a rebate on the room block if you get your contract signed by the end of the month. If they agree to 5 percent on the room block as a rebate, then ask them to apply this as a credit to the overall bottom line.

**Relationships.** But, more than anything else, Fulks advises planners to create a solid working relationship with the sales manager at the hotel. “It is so much easier to do business with someone with whom you have a relationship. They will go the extra mile for you and vice versa. Connect with them on LinkedIn and then recommend them for their skills or write a nice recommendation of your experience working with them. This will take only 15 minutes of time, and they will repay this favor 100 times over because you have gone to the effort of publicly praising them in front of their boss and other customers.” **C&IT**

# Sandals

LUXURY MEETINGS & INCENTIVES COLLECTION



## SOMETHING DIFFERENT ON THE AGENDA

Today’s most admired companies share one extraordinary attribute—they inspire their people. Featuring breathtaking views of Great Exuma in the Out Islands of the Bahamas, Sandals® Emerald Bay is the optimal venue to bolster motivation. Just 40 minutes from South Florida, the stunning resort provides the finest all-inclusive, awe-inspiring destination in the world. A place where organizations come to accomplish things of value and return renewed. Here you will experience a rich and rare confluence of exceptional resort amenities, modern meeting facilities, exotic outdoor locations, exhilarating recreational activities and attentive, personalized service—all set amidst a vibrant island and one of the Caribbean’s finest beaches. For remarkable organizations seeking something different on the agenda—there’s Sandals Emerald Bay.

245 Luxurious Rooms & Suites | 15,000 sq. ft. of meeting space | Greg Norman-Designed Championship Golf Course\* | Seven Restaurants | Red Lane® Spa^ | Tennis | Three Pools | Land & Water Sports | Out Island Excursions^ | 15 Minutes from Airport



**Sandals**  
EMERALD BAY  
GREAT EXUMA, BAHAMAS

MEMBER  
**ALHI**  
ASSOCIATED  
LUXURY HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 1-800-239-2484 • WWW.SANDALS.COM/GROUPS

\*Greens fees additional.\*Additional cost. Sandals® is a registered trademark. Unique Vacations, Inc. is the affiliate of the worldwide representative of Sandals Resorts.





wavebreakmedia/www.shutterstock.com

## How Generational and Cultural Diversity Issues Impact Meetings

By John Buchanan

**O**f the many things a meeting planner must think about today, one of the most important — and most often overlooked — is how generational and cultural differences among attendees can impact an event. More than ever before, whether an attendee is a baby boomer, Gen Xer or millennial, or whether he or she is Muslim, Jewish, or a health or environmental devotee, distinctions among attendees usually means a separate set of planning decisions.

“Diversity among attendees is an issue that is important to the entire meeting industry,” says Yolanda Brown, associate at Herndon, VA-based global consultancy Booz Allen Hamilton. In a year, Brown has planned about 35 meetings, which included both domestic and international attendees. “There’s been a shift in the generational composition of meetings, because you now have Generation Y (millennials) employees advancing quickly and looking for opportunities to show their merit and their worth. But now you also have baby boomers who have delayed retirement and are still around. And a distinction like that is obviously going to affect who you focus on as constituencies.”

Jenny McCullough, director of training and events at Kampgrounds of America (KOA) in Billings, MT, agrees that generational considerations now play a more significant role in her job.

“Just in the three years I’ve been with KOA, we’ve seen a big difference in how we promote our big annual meeting,” says McCullough, who plans the KOA annual franchisee convention and a half-dozen smaller training meetings. “For example, we used to do printed promotional materials, such as newsletters and invitations to the meeting from our president. But more and more now, we’re doing video invites that franchisees can access online, and we’ve also really picked up our e-mail marketing campaign more than ever before.”

Such changes are driven primarily by evolving generational preferences, McCullough says.

Other current examples of a generational concession are mobile apps and electronic promotional content versus traditional printed materials, such as a meeting program. And that’s a change that sometimes triggers generational disagreement.

“We’ve found that although we’re moving toward a digital-friendly meeting, many of our more mature franchisees still prefer a printed program for our annual convention,” McCullough says.

For example, for decades many KOA campground owners have kept printed programs from their annual conventions as valuable mementoes. “And that’s one reason that for us, printed programs will never go away completely,” McCullough says.

At the same time, however, she notes, KOA is striving to make its meeting more interactive and also wants to be able to leverage ever-evolving mobile technology to be able to disseminate more information to attendees throughout the long annual life cycle of the convention.

Brown says Booz Allen also is encountering the same general issue of mobile versus print. “We definitely experience that difference in preferences when it comes to the generations,” she says.

“But what we’re doing now is that we send the material out electronically, and then if someone does want it printed, as opposed to online, then they can get it printed on their own and bring it to the meeting.”

Yet another issue that is now impacted by generational differences is site selection.

“That issue is a big one for us now,” McCullough says. “We’re starting to see a lot of second- and third-generation kids take over the family campground business. So we’ve got people who are in

***“We’ve found that although we’re moving toward a digital-friendly meeting, many of our more mature franchisees still prefer a printed program for our annual convention.”***

their 60s coming to our convention. But we’ve also got people in their 30s that have young families. So now, when we select a destination for our annual convention, we try to find a place that has stuff to do for older couples without children and also for young couples with children.”

Local attractions and activities, including family-oriented attractions and activities for younger attendees, are becoming more and more of a factor in KOA’s destination selections, McCullough says.

For example, that consideration was among the factors that led them to go to Orlando in 2012. “It was our largest meeting ever in terms of attendance,” McCullough says. “And we had over 50 kids.”

### Cultural and Dietary Considerations

In addition to generational issues, cultural considerations — and attendee expectations — are now increasingly playing a role in how meeting planners must do their jobs.

“Culturally, there are now differences in terms of geography with people,” says Christine Gorham, senior associate at Booz Allen Hamilton. “For example, you have to be considerate of either their limitations and/or the different ways they receive and perceive information, whether that’s technologically or just a matter of time



**Jenny McCullough**  
Director of Training and Events  
Kampgrounds of America  
Billings, MT



# Mastering Generational Dynamics

Chuck Underwood, president of The Generational Imperative in Miamisburg, OH and author of *The Generational Imperative: Understanding Generational Differences in the Workplace, Marketplace, and Living Room* (2007), trains meeting planners in how to deal with generational differences on the job. He is creator and host of the multi-part series "America's Generations with Chuck Underwood." New episodes will air on PBS TV stations across the country later this year.

He cites four essential principles that planners must understand and master.

**One of the most important considerations is the format of meeting sessions.**

"The key is you have to be multi-generational in your appeal," Underwood says. "And first and foremost, understand that in the selection of speakers or presenters, none of the three generations that dominate today's

workforce want young, hip and cool speakers. They want the best possible experts in their field. And that is particularly important to young millennials.



UNDERWOOD

"Millennials also want to have one-on-one time with the speakers. They want short, five-minute sessions after the presentation when anyone who wants to can have access to the speaker and ask individual questions."

Only a minority of meeting planners understand that point or make such access available, Underwood says.

**Consider generational differences in the selection of entertainment and social activities.**

"Don't assume that traditional social and entertainment activities remain universally appealing," Underwood says. "Generation Xers often do not like to be at social events that are going to be dominated by older people. Don't underestimate the psychological

distance between Gen X and boomers and millennials. Gen X is an 'island generation' in many ways when it comes to their core values. They are going to be less interested in a cocktail hour that is dominated by boomer executives than they are in an activity that is more individualistic. And Gen Xers prefer to be in the company of other Gen Xers whenever they have the opportunity to choose. Baby boomers and millennials tend to be much more outgoing and more comfortable in your typical cocktail reception."

**Carefully consider session lengths and design them by type of meeting.**

"A good rule of thumb is if you are just trying to introduce a topic or information, as opposed to training people, an introduction session should be 45 minutes of presentation and 15 minutes of Q & A, followed by the opportunity for individual audience members to have five-minute one-on-one conversations with the speaker," Underwood says. "If it is a training session, if the goal is for people to leave with actionable information, then it

absolutely needs to be longer than an hour and could be as long as a half-day. One of the big mistakes meeting planners make is not distinguishing between 'introduction' meetings and training meetings."

**If there is free time during the meeting, the selection of destination is a critical consideration.**

"Millennials are looking for new experiences in the destination," Underwood says. "They are looking for creative activities. They are also foodies and are often looking for unique dining experiences. Generation X is much more individualistic and might be looking for a more solitary and unique experience. Baby boomers tend to align with millennials in liking group activities that also are new and include what the travel industry calls 'soft adventure.'"

Soft adventure travel often includes activities that are leisurely, educational and are not "hard" or dangerous. Examples include wine and culinary tours, architectural tours and the like. Mild physical activity is balanced with down time for attendees.

— JB

and distance. But that's just another example of the changing ways that meetings are being planned and held."

One of the most obvious examples of cultural concerns is religion. "For example, with Muslim attendees, we make sure that we have the right space set aside for prayer or that there is a mosque nearby if the meeting extends to their day of worship," Gorham says.

Another common issue is kosher diets for Jewish attendees.



**Yolanda Brown**  
Associate  
Booz Allen Hamilton  
Herndon, VA

***"With Generation Y, regardless of where they come from, there is just an expectation now that you're going to understand what their needs are prior to them getting to the meeting."***

"Those kinds of cultural or dietary perspectives are now just part of being a meeting planner," Gorham says, "You need to know your audience and what their various requirements or expectations are going to be. And if you don't know that, you need to ask the right questions to find out."

On the other hand, however, Gorham says, "You can't always make everybody happy either.

So you have to prioritize. You have to focus on what really are the key things."

At the moment, one of those key things is more and more attendee requests for gluten-free diets, a shift that transcends traditional "cultural" boundaries to focus on people that are learning about the sometimes negative physical impact gluten has on them.

"Each year, more and more of our attendees request a gluten-free menu," says McCullough, adding that in her observation the trend toward gluten-free diets has become one of the most obvious trends in the meeting industry.

"Many of the people that request a gluten-free diet from us have celiac disease, a digestive disorder, and for years they knew they didn't feel good after eating certain foods," McCullough says. "Now more and more of them know it's because of gluten."

Booz Allen Hamilton, a much larger enterprise than KOA, also has seen a sharp increase in requests for gluten-free food, Gorham says. "And the hotels have been great, because they are very aware now of all these dietary restrictions and preferences."

When Booz Allen considers a destination today, Gorham says, "diet has to be the first and foremost consideration. For example, we always now look at the dietary restrictions of attendees and work very closely with the hotel to make sure those are addressed."

More healthful food, in general, including vegetarian and even vegan options, is now emerging as a cultural issue, McCullough says. "But the main thing we get requests for is just different kinds of food," she says. "People get tired of the standard convention chicken or a make-your-own-sandwich buffet. So we now try to look at different avenues for satisfying the individual tastes of more groups of people."

And again, it is not a generational issue, McCullough says. It is a food issue that manifests as a sort of cultural distinction that must be addressed.

Gorham also has experienced that trend. "And hotels are also much better now at coming up with more creative, healthier menus," she says. "Gone, for example, are the days of heavy meals at lunch time. People want healthier choices today. They want fresh fruit and yogurt and protein. And for their morning and afternoon snacks, they want energy boosters. They want something that's healthy and that is going to keep them going." (Read more in *F&B Trends* on page 26.)

Yet another example of a cultural shift is more attendee focus on — and personal commitment to — environmental and "green" issues.

In particular, for obvious reasons, KOA as a company is very sensitive to environmental issues — and so are its multi-generational attendees. As a result, McCullough increasingly looks for additional sustainable, local food sources to

provide the meals for her meetings. "The other issues that are important to our audience include things like whether vendors donate food to the community and things like that," McCullough says. That, too, she says, is a good example of the kinds of 21st century cultural issues that are having an impact on meetings.

"And we promote those values as part of our meetings," McCullough says.

All of that said, however, perhaps the biggest and most overarching generational issue is one

***"You need to know your audience and what their various requirements or expectations are going to be. And if you don't know that, you need to ask the right questions to find out."***

that often defines Generation Y. Their concerns and preferences stretch over a long and almost endless list of potential considerations, from diet to exercise to local activities.

"With Generation Y, regardless of where they come from, there is just an expectation now that you're going to understand what their needs are prior to them getting to the meeting," Brown says.

"And if, for example, you're sending out in-



**Christine Gorham**  
Senior Associate  
Booz Allen Hamilton  
Herndon, VA



formation beforehand that says, 'These are all the things you can expect at the event,' if they do not see an option they like when it comes to food or anything else, they will respond and say, 'I don't see X. Are you going to offer it?' And I think that example really speaks to the change in expectations. Today, if someone does not see their specific desire or preference addressed, they will point it out and ask for it."

### A Broader Perspective

Misti Burmeister describes herself as an author, speaker and provoker for her company, Provoking Greatness, Across Generations, which is based in Baltimore, MD. Burmeister preaches a more broad-based, somewhat contrarian message when it comes to changes taking place in the meeting world and how they sometimes relate to apparent generational or cultural differences.



***"The No. 1 thing is having a clear sense of purpose for your meeting. Purpose transcends generations. If the value...is not clear, people are not going to care about the meeting."***

**Misti Burmeister**  
Author, Speaker and  
Provoker  
Provoking Greatness  
Across Generations  
Baltimore, MD

"I don't really think the generations are that different," says Burmeister, author of *From Boomers to Bloggers: Success Strategies Across Generations* (Synergy Press LLC, 2008).

In fact, she adds, it is generational commonalities and cross-generational concerns that should be driving the conversation about how meetings are changing and why.

"At the end of the day, everybody wants to think that what they do matters," she says. "They want to feel important, special and valued. So if, as a meeting planner, you can create an event where people are going to feel important, special and valued in the creation of it, people will support that and help create it."

And that kind of consideration has little or nothing to do with age, Burmeister says. It has to do with universal human nature.

The real key to success is having people understand what the underlying purpose of the meeting is and having attendees willingly want to contribute to the success of it, she says.

"Nobody wants to just be 'talked to' anymore, regardless of what generation they're from," she

says. "Nobody wants to be talked at. Everybody wants to be in a conversation with someone else. And that's true of every generation today."

However, she says, there is one area of meeting planning where there is a distinct difference between younger and older attendees. And that has to do with the length of meeting sessions.

An ever-growing body of research demonstrates that younger attendees want shorter, more focused sessions that also are much more interactive than the traditional PowerPoint presentation from a stage.

The underlying question today is how well meeting planners and speakers address that reality, Burmeister says.

"Your sessions have to be short, to the point and interactive," Burmeister says. "You have to get all that stuff straight so that when speakers or executives stand on the stage, they are prepared to deliver 20 minutes of really valuable information. And it takes a long time to prepare 20 minutes of really good information that people will relate to. It takes a lot of thinking. And the constant consideration should be how you make the information more palatable, more relevant to your audience."

And that is the area where planners struggle most, in Burmeister's observation. "And where they're most often lacking is in the planning stage of content," she says.

Beyond that, her message to planners is: "The No. 1 thing is having a clear sense of purpose for your meeting. Purpose transcends generations. And if your purpose is not clear, if the value of the meeting is not clear, people are not going to care about the meeting. And that's true, regardless of what generation they're from."

Nevertheless, adds Chuck Underwood, president of The Generational Imperative in Miamisburg, OH, to do their jobs effectively today (see "Mastering Generational Dynamics," page 18), "Meeting planners must be fully and accurately trained in generational dynamics. And from that training, they will develop what I call a 'generational gearbox' that enables them to shift smoothly from planning meetings and activities that appeal to one generation to planning events that will appeal to all three generations.

"And planners have to get into the heads of all three generations — baby boomers, Gen Xers and millennials — to understand the core values that are unique to each generation and which drive the decision-making of each generation — including their decision about whether they even want to attend the meeting." **C&IT**



**JAMES BEARD AWARD WINNERS**

photo: Clayton Christopherson



**ROOMS OF GLASS WONDER**



**UNFORGETTABLE CITY**

**A trip to the Emerald City is one they will never forget.  
Find out what keeps people coming back to Seattle.**

**VisitSeattle.org**

**VISIT  
seattle**



## It's Crunch Time

### How Medical Meeting Planners Are Managing New Roles and Regulations Under the Sunshine Act

Scott Maxwell / LuMaxArt / www.Shutterstock.com

After years of waiting, wondering and rule changes, the big day finally arrived on August 1, 2013, the effective date of the Physician Payment Sunshine Act, which mandates the reporting of payments or transfers of value between pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers and physicians.

But while some departments spent the first part of this year scurrying to collect data for the first reporting deadline on March 31, 2014, for a surprising number of medical meeting planners, it's more or less business as usual. With overbooked schedules, record numbers of meetings to plan and new internal global strategy partnerships to lead, for many medical planners, compliance systems are handling the changes with relative ease as planners focus on increasing efficiency in other areas.

The advent of the Sunshine Act demonstrates a major shift in medical meeting planning that has been growing ever clearer in recent years: The role of meeting planners in this industry has shifted from pure execution to a key strategic, collaborative function within companies.

#### Sunrise on Sunshine

Even though a reporting process has been established, the principal task now, going through the first cycle, is to spot ways to increase efficiency in what, for many planners, is an incredibly time-consuming process.

"Something that will be very critical this year will be living through that first reporting cycle and trying to get your head around where there are opportunities to improve your process," advises James Vachon, CMM, associate director of events, meetings and conventions at Cambridge, MA-based Millennium Pharmaceuticals. "Has the system that you've set up been designed so that you actually have the information you need in the time frame that is required? And, more importantly, what types of questions or challenges are coming from the physicians that are having data

reported on them? I find that there's certainly been a lot of questions over whether physicians are really truly aware of what's going on. A lot of companies I know ask mandatory questions like, 'Do you acknowledge and accept that we will be reporting on this?' It's funny because no matter how much we tell them, sometimes people don't read it. I think it will suddenly be a light bulb for physicians."

#### Communicating With Physicians

Engaging physicians in the planning process is a key way that many meeting departments are staying on top of reporting, so this awareness is crucial to ease the success of implementation for pharmaceutical companies. "What I did last year, because I knew this was coming, was that when I sent out my information to physicians, I requested the information you don't normally have and is hard to get after the fact. I was collecting it on the front end," says Sandra Dewberry, CMP-HC, meeting services program manager at Greensboro, NC-based Merz North America Inc.

"I put on the registration that this information was required, and when I got it back I looked at every single one and made sure that they answered each question. I've probably done four meetings since the beginning of the year, and I required the information before we got onsite; they weren't able to confirm or register until I had this information. There were no questions. They've all been very compliant. They all knew that this information was coming, and I think they have gotten a lot of education on it too, because they knew what we were talking about."

#### Taking a Hard Line on Reporting

Unfortunately, not all physicians have been prepared with the information at the right time, and Dewberry's team has taken a hard-line stance to make sure their reporting is accurate.

"When we have meetings, we invite certain people, and then we allow walk-ins, and they don't always have that information available, so it can be challenging to get the information," she says. "Last year, when we first started asking for the information, there might have been one or two times when walk-ins didn't have it, and I had to say, 'I'm sorry, but I can't admit you without this information.'"

Though efficient, not all planners are placing the burden of information-gathering on attending physicians. Some have created entirely new offices to handle the task. "We produce a lot of meetings, which creates quite a bit of data to report," explains Jeannine Strampel, CMM, CMP-HC, associate director of meeting management services for Cambridge, MA-based Biogen Idec. "The reporting is a very big piece. All the information collection is completed upfront, and then it's reviewed and audited. We go through constant auditing of the data to ensure accuracy. This puts a lot of strain on planners because of how time-consuming it is, so I actually have a separate staff now to do the reporting, and the planners complete the auditing as well as a separate audit team."

"We've had compliance in place previously. I've been here three years, and it was in place when I came. We're always auditing our meetings, but we decided to assign the Sunshine Act reporting to a separate coordinator. That way the planners can stay focused on the outcome of the meeting, and the Sunshine coordinator can focus on all the details around Sunshine reporting. They work together as one team."

However, not all planners have had systems in place well before Sunshine came along. "For a long time, you heard people from companies saying, 'Well, we're just going to wait and see,' and in those situations, I'd be curious to see where they are," says Vachon. "If you're waiting until after the meeting to pull this together, you'll be so far behind the ball."



## Crunch Time

Dewberry agrees that she's been seeing other planners take a less proactive approach to capturing Sunshine information that can have important repercussions down the line. "I'm seeing a really big crunching in getting this information and interpreting the template, figuring out exactly what information they need,"

***"Something that will be very critical this year will be living through that first reporting cycle and trying to get your head around where there are opportunities to improve your process."***

**James Vachon, CMM, Associate Director, Events, Meetings and Conventions, Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Cambridge, MA**

she says. "It's like reading Latin, and a lot of people didn't capture that information before, and now they're doing catch-up."

"You can collect whatever information you can and go back to your office and go back to the database and try to find that person, but while there are national databases you can go to, the problem with that is that you have to make sure it's the right physician and not someone with the same name," she continues. "I don't like that because you're never sure it's the right one, and this information is going to be posted publicly." Under Sunshine Act rules, data from the 2013 reporting period will be made public September 30, 2014.

Across the board, though, the consensus is that once this initial rough period of implementation is over, the headaches of Sunshine reporting will fade for planners. "I see it going smoothly in the future, because now we know what we need to send, and I think that as time goes on, more and more physicians will bring this information with them," forecasts Dewberry.

"It may not be as clear to people who are not tenured in the industry, not as experienced, but anyone who has been through transitions like this finds that it doesn't take a significant amount of time before people

buy in and develop expectations around those standards," Vachon agrees.

## The New Role of Medical Meeting Planners

Throughout the meeting planning industry, there has been much talk, at first tentatively, and now increasingly confidently, that things are finally rebound-

ing after the shake-up of the recession, but the landscape has changed in key ways.

For medical meeting planners, post-recession caution goes beyond simple budgetary concerns. In fact, in most cases, planners are not finding themselves trying to do more with less. Rather, they are finding their meeting planning process shifting in a much more fundamental and basic way: meeting objectives.

"As the economy is turning, there's more opportunity, but also more pressure on how and when we spend our dollars," says Vachon. "It's not like years ago. It used to be, if you had money at the end of the year, people would say, 'We have extra money, so let's spend it.' I think the pressure is changing things more indirectly. I think now in order to be a good corpo-



***"Companies are only inviting the number of physicians that they need. Meetings are smaller and more productive. There are fewer people but they get more done."***

**Sandra Dewberry, CMP-HC**  
Meeting Services Program Manager  
Merz North America Inc., Greensboro, NC

rate citizen you have to bring strategy to the table. The meeting sponsors and stakeholders are more focused on the end result whether ROI or content development, and we have to really guide them.

"Instead of planning a series, you're more apt to say, let's do this one program and then make sure we can get all our goals, and if we can't, what is the right mechanism to use for follow up — maybe it's not a meeting. Maybe it's a portal that becomes available for physicians with patient information resources, or a message that gets pushed out."

Strampel, whose office has recently shifted from commercial operations to global strategy, completely agrees. "In the last three or four years, the change that I have seen, and this is specific to the industry, is that the meeting planning professionals have become more strategic," she says.

"I'm in the process of putting in place a strategic global meeting management program that we've been working on for a year. The role of the meeting planner is definitely changing to strategic partner."

## New CMP-HC Certification

This shift has been codified with the recent introduction of the Certified Meeting Professional-Health Care (CMP-HC) designation by the Convention Industry Council (CIC). In November and December 2013, a beta exam was offered to individuals who hold the CMP designation, have three years of experience in health care meeting management and have completed 15 hours of professional development specifically related to health care meeting management.

So far, 54 CMPs have taken and passed the exam, but there is great de-

Strampel explains. "I truly believe that if I hire someone with a CMP-HC they understand the business, the strategy behind it, not just booking meetings, but also the partnerships we have with our vendors and stakeholders. They are extremely valuable to our meetings."

The next CMP-HC exam will be issued in November 2014 and subsequently held annually in May and November. The application period for the upcoming November exam is May 14 to July 31, 2014.

## Site Selection Is All Business

In the medical meeting planning space, the shift in focus towards increased efficiency and strategic oversight trickles down from meeting planners' jobs to the meetings they plan. "Early on, when the industry started being scrutinized and compliance became a large part, there were lots and lots of changes, but, now, mainly, I see meetings being more productive," shares Dewberry. "Companies are only inviting the number of physicians that they need. Meetings are smaller and more productive. There are fewer people but they get more done."

"With fewer people...it's just more concentrated and focused. I see longer sessions, working lunches and taking advantage of the breakfast, where they actually have meaningful conversations," she explains. "In particular, lunch is not just lunch, it's working lunch. We used to have a room for lunch and a room for the meeting, but now lunch is set up in the foyer, and they go out and get their lunch and come back to the meeting."

Though the shift seems budgetary, like most recent changes in medical meeting planning, it flows from strategic concerns stemming from a closer examination of the needs of attendees. "I think the physicians love shorter meetings because they spend less time out of their practice," Dewberry explains. "It's really challenging when you ask them to come away for more than a few days. They like to fly in and out. I used to do advisory boards earlier on that were two or three days, but

now there's one full day of meetings and a travel day. They come in the night before and then they have their meeting and they're out the next day or that evening."

## 'Fly In, Get to Work, Fly Out'

Strampel has found her meetings shifting to a similar focus on physician needs, and it also affects how she picks her destinations. "When we have physicians attend our meetings, we value their time and we don't want them to travel far, in consideration of our time and their time," she says. "We're not picking Dallas because it has warm weather. We book Dallas because it has good airlift and non-stop flights. It's pretty much an hour and a half for everybody to get there. We use a lot of airport hotels in most of our cities. They're very convenient for our fly in, get to work and then fly out approach."

For meetings with external stakeholders, face-to-face, in many ways, remains the norm, but digital meetings are



***"We go through constant auditing of the data to ensure accuracy. This puts a lot of strain on planners because of how time-consuming it is, so I actually have a separate staff now to do the reporting."***

**Jeannine Strampel, CMM, CMP-HC**  
Associate Director, Meeting Management Services  
Biogen Idec, Weston, MA

on the rise, and not just for the reason you'd think. "Working in a global environment, you sometimes have to rely on the virtual component, you're certainly not going to fly people in for a half-hour meeting," says Vachon. "I think that virtual meetings are becoming more and more part of our everyday life, and people who are taking advantage of those use them for internal programs. It's a combination of economy and ease."

"However, there are a lot of people who think that if we do this meeting virtually we won't have any travel expense, but you'll have a significantly higher tech expense," he says. "You have to know where people are and what their capabilities are. But if you're just looking from a budgetary standpoint, you might

be missing the boat; what are the results, are they achievable virtually?"

"If you develop your content appropriately, that should be able to happen," Vachon explains. "Let's say you're having an investigator meeting, and there are components where the face-to-face time you have with investigators and study coordinators allows you to understand how they work and how their methods interact with what you're trying to do, but maybe you could cut a day by providing protocol training with a virtual component. Maybe you're not cutting down travel but cutting down the numbers of days. Then once you develop those online materials for that meeting, you don't need to do it again for the next one. It's more cost-effective."

## Walking a New Road

Whether it's the economy, the Sunshine Act or another new regulation coming down the road next, medical meeting planners face more than their share of challenges, but continue to re-

spond with strength due to intrinsic changes in their skill set.

"When you look at meeting planning, and I've been in it a long time, more than 20 years, it was always looked at as the fun group or a fun occupation to have," says Strampel. "But now, because of the pharmaceutical industry and what we've done as a meeting planning industry — with the credentials we've earned and the certifications, meeting planning is viewed differently."

"The role of the meeting planner is absolutely changing, and we are definitely looked at as a partners with our stakeholders. They rely on us immensely for the strategy of the meeting. Five or six years ago it might not have been like that."

C&IT



# F&B Trends

A farm-to-table setup at the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa and Casino.

## A Full Plate

By Stella Johnson

Credit: Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa and Casino

### Planners Must Balance Food Trends and Tastes Along With Dietary, and Budgetary, Restrictions

Whether corporations are going through lean times or living high on the hog, planners know all too well that skimping on F&B is a surefire recipe for a meetings flop. A great food experience can be the best binding ingredient for attendees who are meeting face-to-face, and can be one of the best memory-makers. Expectations run high these days, too, as the foodie trend is turning average attendees into discerning critics who believe that great meals are defined not just by great food, but by the total culinary experience. Sprinkle in some budgetary and dietary restrictions, and it's clear that planners have a lot on their plates.

"Food plays a significant role in our everyday lives, is a large part of our social makeup and a driving force in bringing people together to celebrate anything from a birthday to a retirement party, and from a corporate awards dinner to a new product launch," says Lisa Hopkins

Barry, CPCE, CMP, president of the National Association for Catering and Events (NACE). "Learning better ways to accommodate food requirements for a great group experience is a trend that planners, hoteliers and caterers should embrace and advance together through collaborative efforts."

Planners have taken note. F&B stakeholders are doing more with less and still producing incredible culinary creations using the fresh, local meats and fish, as well as produce, spices, herbs and other ingredients, all the while paying homage to sustainable programs.

Planners such as Guy Genis, founder and CEO of Eventmakers, based in Toluca Lake, CA, notes that most of these changes have occurred within the past five years alone. "First off, people in metropolitan cities, particularly members of the younger generation, have become far more savvy about food and beverage than ever before," he says. "And,

with the advent of the Food Network and reality food competitions like 'Iron Chef America,' the general public has also become more aware of where their food is coming from and how it is prepared. These new preferences affect how and what the public orders, and what guests and attendees would like to have served at conferences, meetings or other corporate events."

#### Something New on the Plate

Lydia Janow, CMP, director of events and trade shows for NYC-based *Aviation Week*, adds that the success of any F&B event depends on how well the planner knows their audience and how much they are willing to work with the chefs and caterers in terms of what they can and cannot do — and vice versa.

Janow is responsible for *Aviation Week's* annual MRO Americas Conference & Exhibition (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) and the magazine's Aerospace

and Defense Programs Conference as well, which has been held at the award-winning Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix, AZ, for the past six years. For these events, Janow has a tried-and-true formula for the menus for approximately 150 attendees.

"These are attended by engineering, strategy, supply chain and program leaders from around the world. I keep the dinner simple by making the main entrée a prime cut of beef like filet mignon or a juicy steak," she says. "They expect it and look forward to it. But, by working with the chef, I let him have a chance to do his thing and be creative with the side dishes and desserts, which he does beautifully, especially in its creative presentation, so that there's always something new on the plate in that respect."

Janow also schedules two lunches and a sit-down, deli-buffet with lots of salad for this group. She adds that they stopped doing heavy meals "many moons ago," so that people would not feel sluggish heading back to the conference room.

"Lighter fare keeps attendees more awake, and hotels have adjusted their menus accordingly. We also offer vegetarian and gluten-free offerings as we are getting more requests for these now," she says.

#### Slicing & Dicing F&B Budgets

Pat Ahaesy, CMP, CSEP, president and partner of P&V Enterprises in New York City, observes that budgets are still a huge concern — and that doesn't appear on any F&B trends lists (*see box*).

"Otherwise, I agree with the findings like locally sourced foods, including their ingredients. Kale is still trending, as well as anything called artisanal, particularly breads. Cupcakes have not lost ground in popularity, including 'decorate-your-own,' following a conference or meeting. Signature drinks named after the event, as well as craft beers, are still in vogue."

Genis adds, "Of course, there is a trend toward local, green-grocer vendors and sustainable foods grown locally in prospective cities and, with that, the quality of all categories of produce, poultry, meat and fish has increased but, the downside

is that the cost has become higher and some budgets have had to adjust."

But, perhaps it's Bonnie Wallsh, CMP, CMM, and chief strategist of Bonnie Wallsh & Associates, located in Charlotte, NC, who cuts the problem down to size. She targets these three super cost-effective strategies:

**1 Designated signatures.** "Present very specific guidelines to the convention services managers that include the statement that only designated signatures from your organization or company for various F&B charges will be accepted before payment will be made. In fact, put that into the contract and stress it at every pre-conference meeting."

**2 Work with the chef.** "This is tantamount to the success of any F&B event and imperative in developing a cost-saving menu in the planning process. Include items such as locally grown food items and portion sizes. Chicken is one of the least expensive ways to go, although some people might be tired of it. Work with the chef to determine the best cuts and spices to use to make it special."

Wallsh continues, "Also, ask the chef what else is being served that day to other groups, and piggyback, because doubling up on the order results in a cost-savings that could be passed along to the planner. Make the chef part of the menu-planning process and listen to what he or she has to say. Have a sit-down with all chefs, salespeople, convention-conference service managers and other appropriate partners."

Wallsh tells of a seven-day event with 850 attendees and 2,200 room nights at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile on Michigan Avenue where the sit-down also included a food-tasting that was so sensational it was a deal-maker. On another occasion, at another hotel in another city, the chef did not want to participate in this fashion, and that was a deal-breaker for the same 850-member group.

**3 Alcohol consumption.** "This depends on the profile of the group, because planners should not skimp for top management officials from the C-suite," says Wallsh. "But, with other business groups, planners can dictate the size of

## Culinary Forecast

One of the most eagerly awaited food trends forecasts is produced every year by the National Restaurant Association. For their 2014 "What's Hot" Culinary Forecast, the association surveyed 1,300 professional chefs, members of the American Culinary Federation. Below are survey results for just four of several food and beverage lists in the forecast.

#### Top 10 Food Trends

1. Locally sourced meats and seafood
2. Locally grown produce
3. Environmental sustainability
4. Healthful kid's meals
5. Gluten-free cuisine
6. Hyper-local sourcing (e.g., restaurant gardens)
7. Children's nutrition
8. Non-wheat noodles/pasta (e.g., quinoa, rice, buckwheat)
9. Sustainable seafood
10. Farm/estate branded items.

#### Top 5 Main Dishes

1. Locally sourced meats and seafood
2. Sustainable seafood
3. New cuts of meat (e.g., Denver steak, pork flat iron, tri-tip)
4. Non-traditional fish (e.g., branzino, Arctic char and barrmundi)
5. Half-portions/smaller portions

#### Top 5 Alcoholic Beverage Trends

1. Micro-distilled/artisan spirits
2. Locally produced beer/wine/spirits
3. "New Make" whiskey
4. Gluten-free beer
5. Food-beer pairings

#### Top 5 Desserts

1. Hybrid desserts (e.g., cronut, townie, ice cream cupcake)
2. Savory desserts
3. House-made/artisan ice cream
4. Bite-size/mini desserts
5. Deconstructed classic desserts

For more "What's Hot" lists from the 2014 Culinary Forecast, visit [www.restaurant.org](http://www.restaurant.org).

— SJ



the glass, the amount of alcohol in each glass and the selection of cheaper brands. Or, they can limit the beverage portion of the meal to wine, beer and a pre-planned signature drink. And don't forget that having some form of entertainment going on in the background or performers mingling with guests. This has been proven to cut down on food and alcohol consumption, too."

Ahaesy also believes that there are still deals out there. She recommends that planners should look at set menus first, but then sit down with the executive chef and discuss options based on the capabilities of that chef and the venue.

"Sometimes, there are some fun options that can seem like they cost much more than they do," observes Ahaesy. "A budget-saving tip is to have 'butlered' hors d'oeuvres as you have more control of portions."

An inexpensive lunch idea Ahaesy recommends is to have pre-made sandwiches served buffet-style, as well as easy-to-eat fruit available, too.

"And don't use bottled drinks. As far as beverages go, limit choices to an event-themed beverage, a white and a red wine, and sparkling water," she says.

To save on beverage, Janow finds that coffee by the gallon is budget-friendly. "Also, stagger appetizers throughout the cocktail hour. Cut down on the order: If there are 150 people in attendance, or-



Executive chef Bill Downes at the Baltimore Marriott Inner Harbor has recently introduced local farm products to the menu.



der 100 pieces per appetizer served instead. I also cut back on bar time by as much 45 minutes depending on time of day."

### Dietary Considerations

NACE's Hopkins emphasizes that dietary restrictions are a top consideration in meal planning, noting that chefs and caterers are now getting creative with these requests.

"The trend of dietary restrictions is really coming into the mainstream now and, while it isn't very glamorous, it is

an absolute must that planners and caterers work together to ensure their menu plans include an appropriate offering for guests who require special accommodation for food allergies, medical restrictions, lifestyle-personal choices or religious practices."

According to Hopkins, there was a time when guests and attendees would call the hotel, privately, and speak to an appropriate staff member about special dietary requests on an almost confidential basis, but all that has changed.

"Now, this information is reaching the catering office through the planner, as guests are disclosing their information to them more openly. Caterers also are more proactive in asking about allergy-related questions in pre-con meetings," adds Hopkins.

To address this growing awareness of healthful food choices, Hyatt Hotels Corporation launched its "Food. Thoughtfully Sourced. Carefully Served" program two years ago. The brand-wide initiative focuses on sourcing and providing food and beverage choices that offer balanced nutrition, controlled portions and natural ingredients. Examples include reducing the hamburger size from eight ounces to seven ounces of meat; mandating gluten-free and vegetarian options on all menus; offering Stay Fit

Cuisine menu items on full-service brand menus; and providing natural bacon, organic produce and hormone-free milk as menu options.

The program also embraces environmental responsibility by sourcing sustainable seafood, naturally raised beef and pork, planting on-property chef's gardens, recycling programs, and new to-go containers and packaging.

Hyatt also supports local communities through this effort by sourcing through local suppliers and mandating that five local ingredients be utilized on the menu.

### Nosh-working

Sometimes the battle cry is for food and beverage events that are interactive and foster networking among meeting attendees. Cassie Brown, CSEP, chief experience officer of TCG Events in Charlotte, NC, advises, "We recently catered a party where we served paella over an open fire pit. We served barbecued beef, Brazilian, churrascaria-style, on skewers, which provides an easy wow factor and gets everyone involved," Brown notes. "At a different event in Orlando for a financial firm, we've had the chefs prepare dessert at each of the tables, which fosters easy conversation among the attendees. Also consider serving dinner family-style and pass around the bowls and dishes, and have a dessert station where you walk up and create your own sweet masterpiece. We did this for an oil company with great success."

But, when all else fails, Guy Genis reminds others to keep it simple and to plan with the mindset that the group in question is your own family.

"How would you honor them with a meal? Then, go from there," he notes.

### New & Noteworthy

**Certified healthful:** The Music City Center in Nashville recently announced that it has been awarded REAL Certification by the U.S. Healthful Food Council. REAL stands for Responsible Epicurean and Agricultural Leadership and is a nationwide program that helps combat diet-related disease by recognizing food-service operators committed to holistic

nutrition and environmental stewardship. The REAL Certification program launched with a restaurant campaign in Washington, DC, last year, and it has since grown to more than 80 locations that include restaurants, workplace dining facilities and public venues across the country.

**Dining with sharks:** When an unforgettable meal function must have an unforgettable setting, too, the 1,675-sf Seascope Ballroom and Shark Reef Aquarium at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas fill that order. Seascope is home to 30 sharks and other amazing aquatic creatures all within a 1.3-million-gallon exhibit that comes complete with tour guides — also providing a built-in source of entertainment.



Groups can eat with man-eating sharks at Mandalay Bay's Shark Reef Aquarium.

The unique venue is perfectly suited for intimate receptions, sit-down dinners and board meetings. A 175-sf outdoor patio and lounge is adjacent to the ballroom, creating an excellent option for an indoor-outdoor reception or other corporate event.

**A movable feast.** PGA National Resort & Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, FL, has rolled out its new "iTruck," a gourmet food truck available for corporate events. Serving as the "92nd Hole" for the resort's five golf courses, iTruck fare features selections from the resort's world-class culinary team including

BBQ pork sliders, "Birdie Shrimp," truffle fries, "PGA Signature Champ Burger," crab fritters, meatball sliders, lobster sliders and more.

**Hyper-local sourcing:** Local sourcing is big but even bigger is hyper-local sourcing. That can mean an industrious chef with a green thumb and a rooftop garden.

For example, Baltimore Marriott Waterfront's executive chef Carlos Gomez meets the demand for farm-to-table ingredients with his own rooftop herb and vegetable garden. With the assistance of his culinary team, as well as students from nearby Stratford University, the garden features a variety of fresh herbs and vegetables including basil, chives, curry, peppermint, oregano, rosemary, thyme, peppers and tomatoes. He plans to add to this garden every year and to eventually make the garden a community initiative.

Similarly, executive chef Bill Downes at the nearby Baltimore Marriott Inner Harbor has recently introduced local farm products to the menu and, to support his farm-fresh mission, he, too, has created his own herb and vegetable garden on that hotel's rooftop with the vision of building a greenhouse to support year-round growth. He also notes that he sees a trend for regional cuisine which, at the Inner Harbor property, would be Maryland "True Blue" crab cakes and even crab pretzels.

**Culinary teambuilding:** The Viking Culinary Studio at Château Élan Winery and Resort, located 40 miles outside of Atlanta in Braselton, GA, has been a site for various interactive culinary teambuilding exercises, such as "Winemaker Wannabe," in which participants create and brand their own wine and try to "sell" it to the group. In the "Impersonating a Chef" event, teams prepare dishes that are judged by a panel. "Topsy Canvas" gives groups step-by-step instructions on painting their own masterpieces, while enjoying good company and Château Élan's wine.

Considering all the ingredients that planners need to consider in concocting a successful F&B event, the right recipe really boils down to the basics: good food, good drink and good company. **C&IT**



PGA National Resort & Spa has rolled out a gourmet food truck experience for groups.



## Destination

# Orlando

‘Where There’s  
Something New Every Year’

By Derek Reveron



The retro-themed Cabana Bay Beach Resort is now open at Universal Orlando Resort.

Visit Orlando President and CEO George Aguel earlier this month proudly announced that Orlando set an all-time record for U.S. destinations by welcoming 59 million visitors in calendar year 2013 — a hefty 3 percent increase over 2012.

Add that triumph to a number of other accomplishments such as CVB of the Year by ConferenceDirect in 2013 and HelmsBriscoe in 2012. Aguel says he “likes the sound of CVB of the Year.”

And troves of meeting professionals couldn’t agree more with Aguel, who asserts, “Orlando is one of the top destinations for meetings, conventions and trade shows in the world. Our award-winning convention center is recognized each year for its outstanding service and amenities. We offer an incredible diversity of hotel and resort properties for meeting professionals to choose from.”

Aguel continues, “As a city, we’re constantly evolving. Orlando is a destination where there’s something new every year. Universal’s Cabana Bay Beach Resort just opened, and this summer, for example, we have the grand opening of the Four Seasons Resort at Disney as well as the new entertainment complex on International Drive near the convention center — the



George Aguel, President and CEO  
Visit Orlando, Orlando, FL

*“As a city, we’re constantly evolving. Orlando is a destination where there’s something new every year.”*

future home of the Orlando Eye (observation wheel) — which will add more restaurants, shops and attractions to the mix.

“Of course, there also are our outstanding theme parks. Groups can take over areas of the parks for private events that guests will remember for years to come. Our restaurant scene is also constantly evolving with new restaurants that will excite even the most discerning attendees. From elegant, top-rated Zagat restaurants to casual pubs, there’s something for every taste — all within minutes from the convention center and convention hotels.”

Orlando doesn’t rest complacently on its lofty perch as one of the world’s top meeting, incentive and convention destinations. The city relentlessly continues to add more of everything corporate planners need.

As a matter of fact, Orlando is experiencing one of the most significant expansion periods in the destination’s history. According to Visit Orlando, Universal Orlando Resort will open the world’s first centrally themed, multi-park experience this summer by expanding The Wizarding World of Harry Potter across both of its theme parks. SeaWorld Orlando recently opened Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin — the biggest expansion in its company’s history, while Walt Disney World Resort will complete a multiyear project that is doubling the size of Fantasyland when it debuts the Seven Dwarfs Mine Train coaster this summer.

Meetings held earlier this year in Orlando include the bi-annual Business Alignment Meeting (BAM) of Milwaukee, WI-based Rockwell Automation. Business and sales leaders from more than 40 countries gathered for a five-day meeting at the 1,000-room, South Seas-themed Loews Royal Pacific Resort, according to Jeff Storley, manager, commercial events, Rockwell Automation. BAM was held at the Loews Royal Pacific Resort in 2012 and also is scheduled for 2016 and 2018. Rockwell Automation also held three software technical education conferences for end users and other business partners at the resort in 2003, 2005 and 2007.

Loews’ 85,000 sf of flexible conference space is a big reason Rockwell Automation returns often to the property. Conference facilities, which are located on one floor, allow attendees to flow efficiently between classrooms when sessions are on a tight schedule, and the U-shaped arrangement is conducive to training sessions, says Storley.

### Theme Park Bonuses

The BAM meeting held roughly 90 classes over four days in about 20 different classrooms. The technical education conferences had nearly 1,000 computers in the conference space networked together for end users and other business partners.

Storley also likes Universal Resorts’ self-contained setting and the endless variety of entertainment and activities available on-property. “We had an event at Streets of New York, says Storley. “We rented out a section of Universal, and they gave us a number of rides as part of the rental. We also opened up their shops and restaurants and had Universal characters roving through the crowd. The big attractions for us were the Transformers



Rockwell Automation attendees like the atmosphere, the food and beverage and energy found on the Streets of New York — one of Universal Studios’ popular gathering places.

ride, the Despicable Me ride, Shrek 4D and Revenge of the Mummy. Some people also went to Disney, Cape Canaveral and SeaWorld during their visit to Orlando.”

The Loews Royal Pacific Resort also is a property of choice for Rockwell Automation because it provides great value. “It’s an awesome value,” says Storley. “We are very budget-conscious, and they help us to make sure we manage our budget to the letter. We feel we get great value. We have been working with the same salesperson for every meeting.”

Later this year, Walt Disney World Resort will host a meeting of a major international candy and confections cor-



The DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld, an official on-site SeaWorld partner hotel, is Orlando’s premier meetings destination. With 1,004 guest rooms and suites and 60,000 square feet of indoor/outdoor meeting space, along with multiple dining options, full-service business center, internet café and recreational amenities, we are the ideal choice for your Orlando meeting. Experience our Florida-inspired, 28-acre oasis conveniently situated in the heart of Orlando’s famous attractions and close to the Orange County Convention Center.

For more information, contact our sales department at 407-354-0056 or groups@DoubleTreeOrlandoSeaWorld.com.

Hilton HHonors membership, earning Points & Miles®, and redemption points are subject to HHonors Terms and Conditions. ©2014 Hilton Hotels Corporation

**DOUBLETREE**  
BY HILTON®  
ORLANDO  
AT SEAWORLD®

10100 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32821  
Phone 407-352-1100  
www.DoubleTreeOrlandoSeaWorld.com





poration based outside of Florida. The company will hold its fifth consecutive annual sales meeting at a Walt Disney World Resort property this spring and return again in 2015. The group has held meetings at the Disney's Yacht Club Resort, Disney's Contemporary Resort and Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa.

Six years ago, the candy company's sales group meeting planner (who requested anonymity) didn't consider meeting at Disney. "I wasn't even planning to do a site visit," she says. "As luck would have it, a former executive at our company became an executive with Disney and encouraged us to look at it as a possibility. I agreed to go there on a site visit, and we've been going since."

Walt Disney World Resort is the company's destination of choice for several reasons. "There are so many opportunities to have different experiences in the same venue that we wouldn't have been able to have at a reasonable cost anywhere else," she explains. "You couple that with the fact that Orlando is one of the least expensive places to bring a large group. And here's a key: They offer amenities to the



Dining in Downtown Orlando is getting a lot of buzz nowadays. Groups are welcome, and attendees on their own time have a variety of choices.



family and friends of attendees who want to come a few days before the meeting or stay on afterwards."

In addition, meeting at Walt Disney World provides good value. The candy company initially signed meeting contracts year-by-year, but now has a great multiyear deal, says the planner. "The room rates are very good," she says. "The food and beverage rates are competitive. If someone is looking for food and beverage price alone, they probably wouldn't choose Disney, but there are so many other things included in the packages that make it a good value."

The company's four-day sales meeting at the Yacht Club Resort last year included about 450 attendees. The group took full advantage of all that the hotel offers, starting with the beach. "We had a beach party for a welcome reception," says the planner. "It was a casual barbecue. We used the Disney DJs for dancing. Our salespeople loved being able to go to dinner in their bare feet and play volleyball and horseshoes. We had (a famous NASCAR driver that the company sponsors) signing autographs on the beach. We also had a fire and made s'mores."

The meeting's general session included a special confec-

tionary touch. "We made it look and feel like chocolate with lots of brown piping and drapes," says the planner. "We had chocolate machines to infuse the smell of chocolate when people walked into the room."

In addition, the company hosted a formal black-tie gala dinner in the Grand Floridian's convention center, according to the planner. "It was themed to the colors representing the traditional high-honor awards for career sales accomplishments. We used black, gold and red colors, and changes in lighting and drapery to make the ballroom look like it was converted into something different than it was during the general session. We had an after-party in a hospitality room, where we brought in dueling piano players."

The sales group's previous annual meetings at Disney have taken full advantage of other activities and entertainment offerings. "One year we did a dinner at Epcot Theme Park" says the planner. "They closed off a balcony for us to watch a light show and fireworks. Another year, we did a special event at Disney's Hollywood studios, and we had private access to the rides. We also had customized food and entertainment. They learned about our brand and helped us incorporate it into our theme through entertainment, whether it was a comedian or strolling musician. One year, they customized dessert and 3-D eyeglasses to our brand."

### Making Meetings Easy

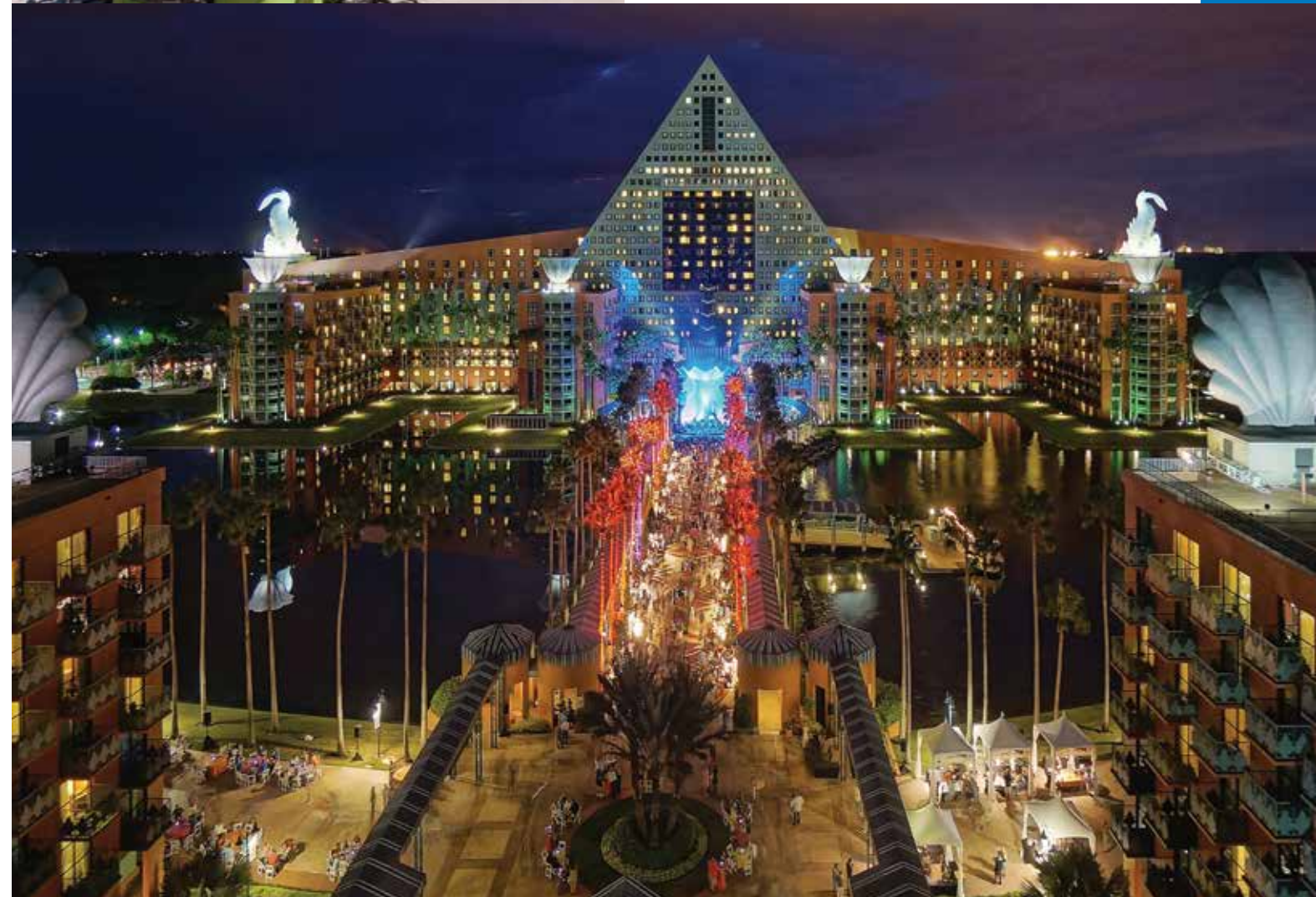
The candy company's planner cites Disney's overall commitment to great customer service as a major reason for returning year after year. "If there is anything that stands out no matter which venue we use, it's the partnership with the people," she says. "From the sales teams to the people at the convention center, the way they partner with you sets them apart from other venues, and it keeps us coming back. They make meetings easy for us." That's one reason why the company's research and development as well as its brand team also have held meetings at Disney, she adds.

Planners point out that Orlando is a world-class destination partly because its theme parks offer such dedicated service to meetings both large and small. An oil and gas services company based outside of Florida held a three-day meeting earlier this year for 125 of its banking business partners, mostly from the northern and central U.S. It's the eighth consecutive year that the company (which would like to remain anonymous) has held the meeting at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa.

Although the oil and gas company has met at the same property for eight consecutive years, the group continues to find new activities, entertainment and experiences. "This year we did a dinner at Epcot's World Showcase pavilion in a venue that is not open to the public," says Luz France, the



## REIMAGINE meetings



*ReImagine* your next meeting in a place where unforgettable surroundings *inspire creativity*. Expertly designed facilities provide the perfect backdrop for meetings from 15 to 5,000. With two decades of *service expertise* backed by *award-winning* accommodations and dining, this is the world you'll experience at the *Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort*.

800.524.4939 • [www.swandolphinmeetings.com](http://www.swandolphinmeetings.com)





company's planner and executive assistant. "We did a Cirque du Soleil-type entertainment where they entertained on a center stage with the group seated around them. We did the Richard Petty Driving Experience (which provides the thrill of a real NASCAR race). We also fished in the Seven Seas Lagoon on boats docked at the Grand Floridian. They golfed at the Magnolia and Palm courses, and enjoyed the Senses Spa at the Grand Floridian. Some people did the various park and back-lot tours that Disney offers."

France also touts the Grand Floridian's audio-visual ser-



Attendees will never forget the thrill of participating in "motortainment" group outings at the Richard Petty Driving Experience at the Walt Disney World Speedway.

vices. "Our in-house technology people worked with the hotel staff," says France. "Our audio-visual included a company video that we shot in HD and put together mainly for this meeting." France adds that the hotel's premier HD equipment made his audio-visual content look "very sharp."

State-of-the-art audio-visual and technology help cement Orlando's status as a premiere destination. Andrew Taffin, CEO of Iselin, NJ-based Tallen Technology Rentals, which has provided audio-visual and technology rentals to meetings in Orlando with up to 5,000 attendees, describes the destination's audio-visual and technology services as "unlimited."

More Orlando properties are tying audio-visual and other visual technology to mobile event apps, many of which integrate games and fun, interactive features such as contests and scavenger hunts. Orlando properties also are using interactive technology such as displays and touch-screens to connect meetings in separate rooms and other function spaces both indoors and outdoors.

Overall, meeting planners will be pleased to learn that Orlando has plenty of room for all their events. Orlando boasts more than 450 hotels with more than 118,000 rooms. Out of that total, meeting properties number 36, with a total of 33,343 rooms. (Meeting hotels, also known as convention hotels, are defined here as having a minimum of 300 rooms and no less than 20,000 sf of meeting space.)

Orlando continues to increase its supply of technologically modern hotels: The projected total of all rooms jumps to 120,575 for 2015.

Here's the latest property news for Orlando.

## New and Improved

**Universal Orlando Resort's Cabana Bay Beach Resort** opened March 31. The retro-style, 1,800-room resort is the largest of Universal's four onsite Loews Hotels. **Loews Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Orlando** completed a \$14 million renovation of its 750 guest rooms and suites and refurbished the hotel's façade. Loews Portofino Bay features 42,000 sf of meeting space.

The 444-room **Four Seasons Resort Orlando at Walt Disney World** is scheduled to open in late summer 2014. The lakeside resort will offer 37,750 sf of meeting and function space including ballrooms of 14,000 sf and 6,000 sf. Groups will enjoy nightly fireworks views, great golf, the spectacular five-acre Explorer Island and much more.



Credit: Richard Petty Driving Experience

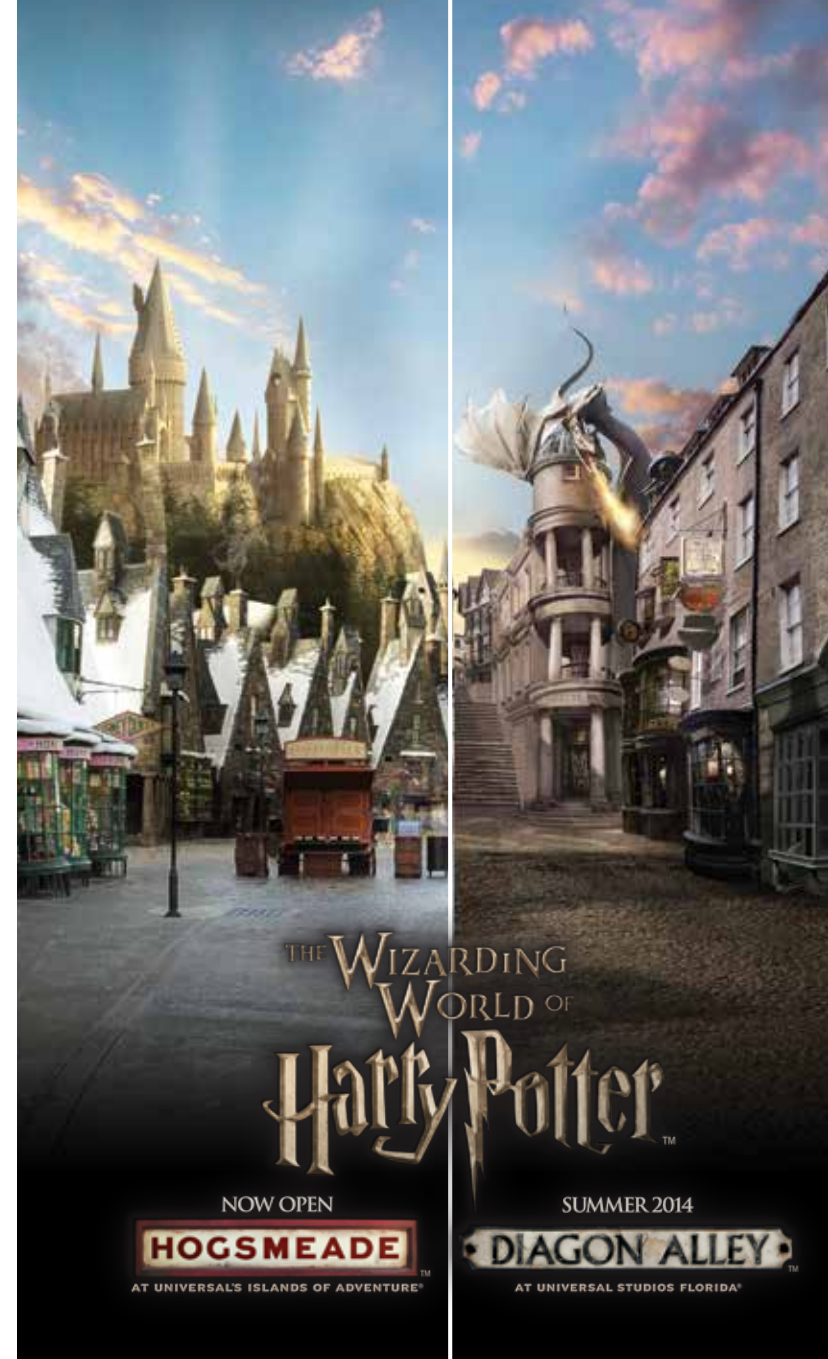
The 1,417-room **Hilton Orlando's** new 50,000-sf outdoor Promenade features spectacular water and fire fountains and provides a lush landscaped lawn and patio ideal for intimate gatherings or large events for 100 to 3,000 guests. Four distinct areas include the Sky Terrace, Grande Lawn, Fountain Plaza and Sun Garden. Tents, catering, lighting, sound and entertainment are available for custom-designed events. An elevated pedestrian bridge connects the hotel to the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC).

**Sheraton Lake Buena Vista Resort** is undergoing a \$25 million makeover. The project includes the hotel's 429 guest rooms, meeting spaces, redesigned pools and dining options.

**The Westin Orlando Universal Boulevard**, located directly across from the North/South concourse of the OCCC, has opened a new meeting and special event center. The 5,575-sf Lotus Ballroom increases the 315-room hotel's total function and prefunction space to 13,685 sf. The new ballroom accommodates up to 300 guests for a banquet setting or meeting and up to 500 guests for a reception. The new ballroom is adjacent to the hotel's free-form outdoor pool, another ideal location for outdoor group functions.

The 2,000-room **Orlando World Center Marriott** has completed a five-year, multimillion-dollar refurbishment that included the North Tower's 514 guest rooms, 10 suites and 110 guest suites. The Hall of Cities meeting rooms also underwent renovation. The property boasts 450,000 sf of function space.

Over the past 40 years, Rosen Hotels & Resorts has deliv-



VISIT [UOMEETINGSANDEVENTS.COM/CIT](http://UOMEETINGSANDEVENTS.COM/CIT) OR CALL 888-322-5531.

UNIVERSAL'S ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE® | UNIVERSAL STUDIOS FLORIDA® | UNIVERSAL CITYWALK®  
LOEWS PORTOFINO BAY HOTEL | HARD ROCK HOTEL® | LOEWS ROYAL PACIFIC RESORT  
UNIVERSAL'S CABANA BAY BEACH RESORT (OPENING EARLY 2014)

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter™ Butterbeer™ and beverage  
HARRY POTTER, characters, names and related indicia are trademarks of and © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Harry Potter Publishing Rights © JKR.  
(s14)  
TRANSFORMERS and its logo and all related characters are trademarks of Hasbro and are used with permission. © 2014 Hasbro. All Rights Reserved. © 2014 DreamWorks L.L.C. and Paramount Pictures Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Cabana Bay Beach Resort © 2014 UCF Hotel Venture II. All rights reserved. Universal elements and all related indicia TM & © 2014 Universal Studios. © 2014 Universal Orlando. All rights reserved. 1401953/AS

LOEWS HOTELS  
RESORTS





The Gary Sain Memorial Skybridge connects the Rosen Plaza Hotel to the West Building of the Orange County Convention Center.

ered one-of-a-kind Orlando experiences. Their three meeting hotels include **Rosen Shingle Creek**, **Rosen Plaza Hotel** and **Rosen Centre Hotel**. Rosen Plaza Hotel was connected to the OCCC West Building via the Gary Sain Memorial Skybridge in September. Rosen Plaza is updating its fine-dining restaurant, Jack's Place, slated to open in the fall. Rosen Centre Hotel is opening a new poolside restaurant this summer, Harry's Poolside Bar & Grill.

The newly renovated **Wyndham Orlando Resort International Drive** boasts new resort-chic décor for the property's 613 guest rooms and suites, a newly renovated lobby lounge, and 25,000 sf of newly constructed meeting space and expansive outdoor venues for events.

### Other Developments

Orlando-based Unicorp National Developments Inc. is busy with two development projects: the \$100 million I-Shops redevelopment/expansion of the Wyndham Orlando Resort and the future home of The Orlando Eye on International Drive — the \$200 million dining-shopping-entertainment complex. The new Orlando Eye — a 425-foot observation wheel — will be complemented by attractions such as Sea Life Aquarium and Madame Tussauds wax museum. LongHorn Steakhouse is now open and Yard House Orlando is set to open in April. Other restaurants will open as they are completed.

The 1,641-room Peabody Orlando was reflagged as the **Hyatt Regency Orlando**. Before it changed hands last fall, the property was renovated for approximately \$440 million. The property also boasts a spa, fitness center, three pools and three restaurants. It has 315,000 sf of meeting space and is attached to the OCCC.

Earlier this year, **Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club & Lodge** landed on the prestigious 2014 *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List, scoring a 100 percent ranking for service. The property offers 70 rooms, 9,000 sf of meeting and banquet space as well as 27 holes of golf.

### Extra, Extra

Combining business and pleasure just got a little easier at the **Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin** as the new Disney FastPass+ allows hotel guests to reserve up to 60 days in advance of their trip and choose from a broader array of options, including Disney Character Greetings, fireworks and parade viewing areas, shows and spectacles.

The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin, located in the heart of Walt Disney World, offers 2,265 guest rooms and more than 329,000 sf of meeting space including 84 meeting rooms, two executive boardrooms, four ballroom options, 110,500 sf of contiguous convention/exhibit space, outdoor function areas and two business centers.

Disney Differences are part of the package at Swan and Dolphin, too. They may include such items as access to Walt Disney World Theme Parks for "magical" parties and events; Disney Character appearances at group functions; the world-renowned executive training of the Disney Institute and the Walt Disney World business programs; behind-the-scenes tours and personal enrichment programs; access to ESPN Wide World of Sports for sporting events, teambuilding programs and themed functions; exclusive mid-day and multi-day meeting/convention tickets to the Walt Disney World Theme Parks; extra Magic Hours benefit; complimentary transportation throughout the resort including water taxi service to Epcot and Disney's Hollywood Studios; access to four nearby championship Walt Disney World golf courses; and more.

Planners considering **Doubletree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld**, formerly the Doubletree Resort Orlando – International Drive, will find extra benefits as the property is an official onsite SeaWorld partner hotel. The resort offers 1,004 guest rooms and suites, 60,000 sf of flexible indoor/outdoor meeting and banquet space, multiple dining options and complimentary transportation to the major theme parks. Complimentary Quick Queue at SeaWorld; compli-

# ROSEN

## HOTELS & RESORTS



40  
years  
of passion

## 40 years of setting new standards in Orlando.

Over the past 40 years, Rosen Hotels & Resorts has delivered one-of-a-kind Orlando experiences with service that continually redefines exceptional. In a city famous for world-class hospitality, that is an achievement we proudly celebrate, and we invite you to do the same. To mark this special milestone, we have put together a host of anniversary offers to take advantage of. And to make it even sweeter, we will be giving away beautiful ruby necklaces throughout 2014. Ask your Sales Associate for details when you submit an RFP.

Call 407.996.4890 or visit **RosenHotels.com/40** to learn about our special anniversary offers and take advantage of them.





mentary transportation to SeaWorld, Aquatica, Discovery Cove, and Universal Orlando and others are a few of the extra benefits available.

### Theme Park Additions

Universal Orlando Resort is expanding the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, adding the London-themed Diagon Alley area in Universal Studios this summer. The new attraction, which doubles the size of the Harry Potter world, will feature new experiences based on Diagon Alley and Knockturn Alley from the Harry Potter series.

Connecting the existing and new Harry Potter lands will be the Hogwarts Express train, which will treat guests to two completely different experiences depending on whether they're traveling to Hogsmeade in Islands of Adventure or to Diagon Alley in Universal Studios. It's the first time that a train will connect two themed areas at Universal.

Once seated in the cabin, passengers will be able to look out their windows as scenes and characters from Harry Potter books and films pass by. They'll see Hagrid come alongside the train on his flying motorbike, Buckbeak the Hippogriff swoop gracefully over the black lake, the Weasley twins on brooms and up to their usual antics, the Knight Bus swerving through London traffic — and other special moments and surprises.

Universal Orlando's CityWalk will open eight new culinary venues in CityWalk during 2014, including the

Hot Dog Hall of Fame, featuring iconic hot dog creations from famous ball parks; CowFish, an innovative and trend-setting concept out of Charlotte, NC; the popular Cold Stone Creamery; and Menchie's.

Original concepts include Antojitos Authentic Mexican Food, a unique tapas-style restaurant; Bread Box, a home-style sandwich shop; a new modern Italian kitchen concept, where guests can watch as the culinary team handcrafts their pasta from scratch; and Red Oven Pizza Bakery — Universal's first-ever Neopolitan-style pizza bakery, which is now open.

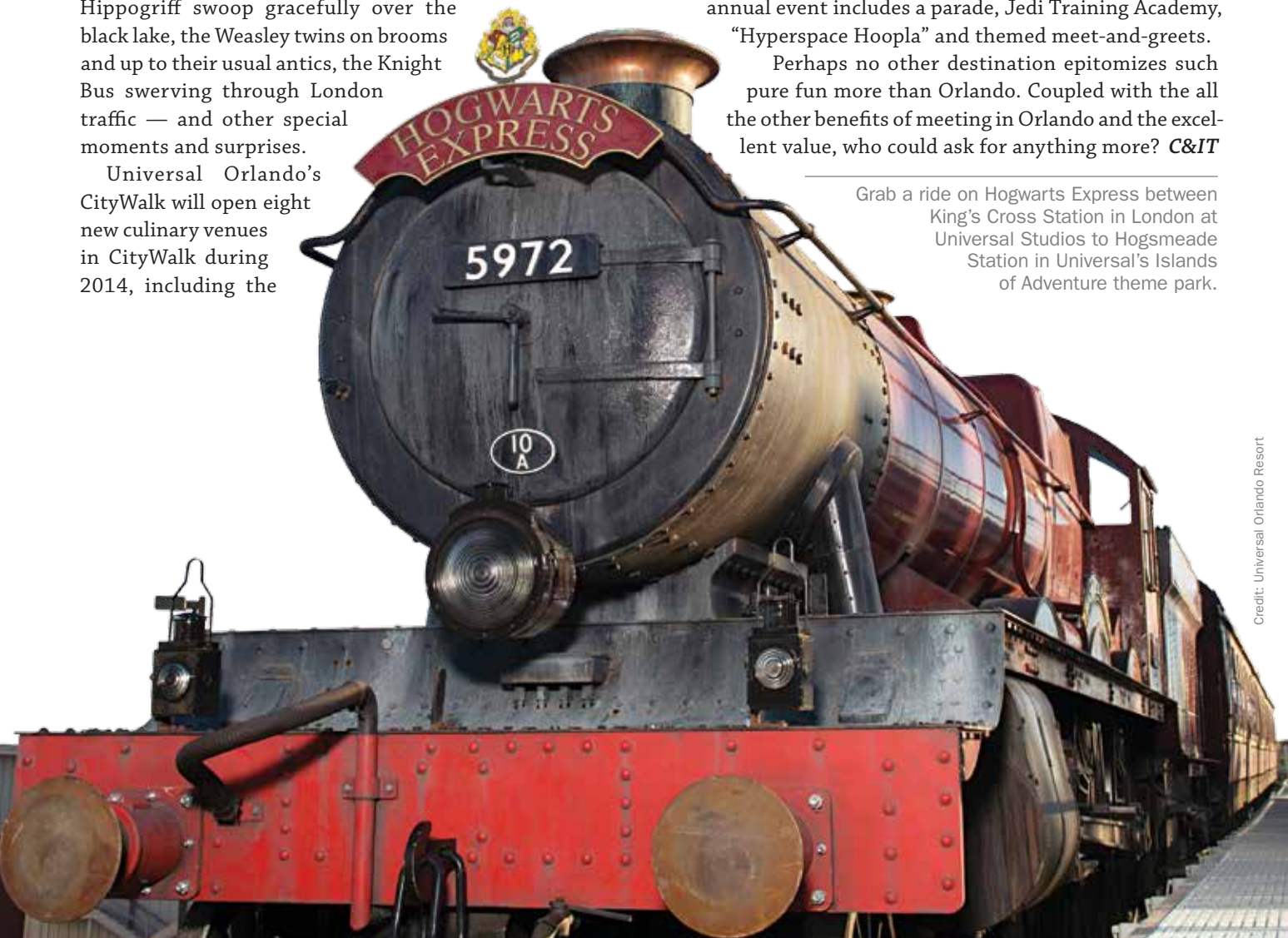
Walt Disney World Resort broke ground on an Avatar-inspired land. The new attraction, located at Disney's Animal Kingdom, is the largest in its history and will take several years to complete.

Disney's Magic Kingdom Park debuted the Disney Festival of Fantasy, its newest daytime parade. The parade will include characters from stories such as "The Little Mermaid," "Dumbo," "Sleeping Beauty" and "Pinocchio."

Walt Disney World Resort also announced the return of Star Wars Weekends to Hollywood Studios by late spring. The annual event includes a parade, Jedi Training Academy, "Hyperspace Hoopla" and themed meet-and-greets.

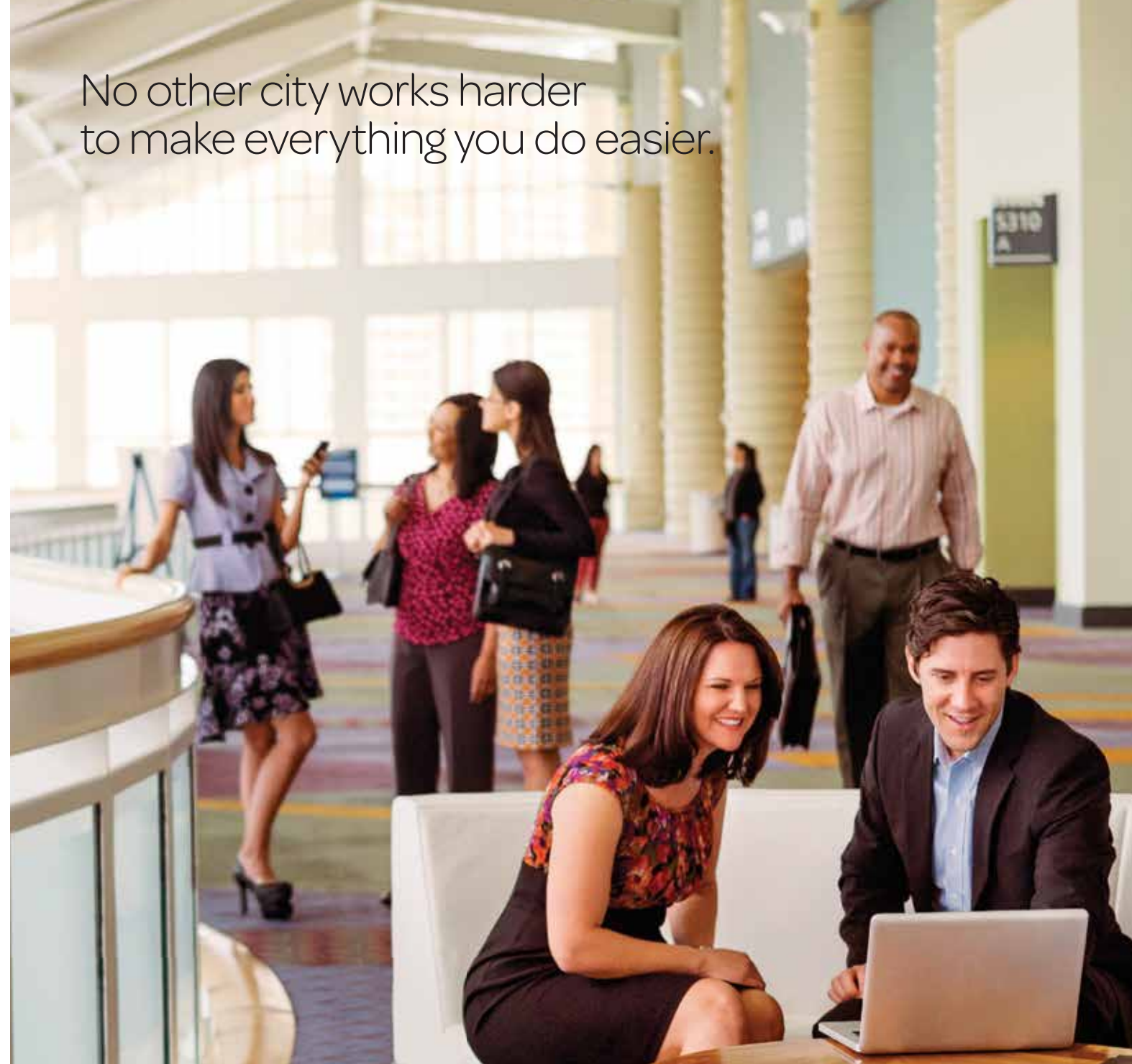
Perhaps no other destination epitomizes such pure fun more than Orlando. Coupled with the all the other benefits of meeting in Orlando and the excellent value, who could ask for anything more? **C&IT**

Grab a ride on Hogwarts Express between King's Cross Station in London at Universal Studios to Hogsmeade Station in Universal's Islands of Adventure theme park.



Credit: Universal Orlando Resort

No other city works harder to make everything you do easier.



**When it comes to meetings and events, Orlando always over delivers.**

A number of distinctive dining and entertainment districts. An ever growing number of accommodating hotels. And the No. 1 convention center in the country.\* No wonder Orlando is a leading destination for meetings and events.

From four-star hotels to innovative meeting spaces to distinctive dining and entertainment districts...  
**There's more to meetings and events in Orlando.**

Visit us online and learn more.

\*According to Business Review USA.

**Visit Orlando**  
OrlandoMeeting.com



# Eureka!

## Discover Meetings Gold in California



By  
Karen Brost

There are plenty of golden meeting opportunities waiting to be mined in The Golden State of California. Not only is there a long list of outstanding hotels, resorts and convention facilities, there also are an endless variety of activities and attractions to go along with the sun, surf and sand. But for Sandra Ponce, associate manager, human resources for Taco Bell, choosing the right California destination was all about sterling service.

### Newport Beach

Ponce leads a leadership development class for the company's restaurant general managers. The one-week program, called The Mark, is conducted in a series of eight waves throughout the year with 60–65 attendees at each session. For almost five years now, the company has been housing its general managers at the 335-room Radisson Hotel Newport Beach. The actual training takes place at Taco Bell's headquarters in nearby Irvine.

She explained why they chose the Radisson. "When we first started looking for a location, we were looking for a place that was committed to extending the experience the GMs were experiencing here in the session. When meeting with the staff at the Radisson, I just felt that they were committed to going above and beyond. They got the purpose of what we were doing, and they were truly committed to taking care of our restaurant GMs and providing them with an experience that was just as great as what they were experiencing here at the restaurant support center."

Ponce gave a few examples of the Radisson's "above and beyond" service. "Because they're close to the airport, they're able to pick up our GMs from the airport when they come in. They host a welcome reception for them with hors d'oeuvres and drinks. It's an opportunity for them to start networking with each other that really goes above and beyond, and makes them feel really welcomed. Also, in partnership with Visit Newport Beach (the city's CVB, also known as Newport Beach and Company), they provide transportation for us for the week so we're not relying on hotel shuttles. It is a bus that

is reserved for us, so again, it's about (the GMs) being together, being able to do all of our activities that week because of the transportation that is being included."

She offers an example: "On Wednesday, we have a community service event. We are across the street from the Irvine Spectrum (a large outdoor shopping, dining and entertainment center). We have our GMs go to Target and shop and fill up 10 backpacks for underprivileged teenagers who we are helping and supporting, and so they transport us back and forth for that. On Thursday, we give them a free night to explore the town, and they have been gracious enough to take our GMs to the Irvine Spectrum as well as to the Balboa Pier."

Ponce describes what she likes about hosting her leadership program in Newport Beach. "Everybody I've interacted with has been extremely helpful and willing to make this a memorable

***"Everybody I've interacted with (in Newport Beach) has been willing to make this a memorable experience."***

**Sandra Ponce**, Associate Manager, Human Resources  
Taco Bell, Irvine, CA

experience for everybody who comes and attends our program."

Located approximately 40 miles south of Los Angeles, Newport Beach is easily accessible from John Wayne Airport in Orange County. The city is known for its natural beauty, coastal lifestyle and Newport Harbor, the largest small yacht harbor in the U.S.

Also located in the Newport Beach area is the luxurious 332-room Pelican Hill Resort in nearby Newport Coast. The property is part of the Irvine Company's resort properties division. Set on 504 acres offering spectacular coastal views and bordered by more than 50,000 acres of protected natural open land, the resort features an elegant architectural design inspired by Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio. For

Sai Yeung Chan/www.shutterstock.com





Credit: San Diego Marriott Gaslamp Quarter

The Altitude Sky Lounge atop the San Diego Marriott Gaslamp Quarter features views of the city, San Diego Bay and Petco Park.

accommodations, the resort offers a choice of luxurious bungalows, suites and villas, and for golfers, there's the Pelican Hill Golf Club featuring 36 holes designed by Tom Fazio, most of them delivering ocean views. The resort's 20,000 sf of function space includes a separate event center, Mar Vista, and an event lawn with a Renaissance-inspired rotunda.

The upscale Island Hotel in Newport Beach also is owned and managed by Irvine Company. The 20-story, 295-room property offers views of the Pacific Ocean and is located in the heart of Newport Center and next to Fashion Island, a popular dining and shopping center. The hotel's meeting space has been extensively renovated and features lush, tropical plants, plantation shutters and raffia wall coverings.

## Irvine

Irvine Company also recently added the Hotel Irvine Jamboree Center to its portfolio of managed properties. The company has owned the 536-room hotel since it was built in 1985, but it was formerly branded as a Hyatt. The hotel is conveniently located near dining, shopping and entertainment venues, and golf is readily available at the Tom Fazio-designed

***"We are really excited to see (the Hotel Irvine's renovation) plans come to life and into fruition for our event."***

**Sophia Tran**, Senior Executive Assistant to the CEO, Specific Media, Irvine, CA



Oak Creek Golf Club. The hotel offers 35,000 sf of meeting space, including 25 meeting rooms, and is home to the largest ballroom in Irvine.

Sophia Tran, senior executive assistant to the CEO of the interactive media company Specific Media, plans all of her company's events, and she has been using this property for seven years. She says that the transition from the Hyatt to the Hotel Irvine has been "seamless," noting that the hotel

retained many of its employees and she didn't have to start over. The staff already knew of her history with the Hyatt, so they were familiar with all of her meeting preferences.

By the end of 2014, the Hotel Irvine is scheduled to undergo \$30 million in renovations. The guest rooms will be redone floor by floor, and the meeting space, outdoor areas and first-floor restaurant and lounges also will be renovated. The announcement of the renovation project was all Tran needed to hear to bring her annual sales conference for over 500 employees back to Irvine. It has been held in Los Angeles for the past two years. "They guaranteed us that the renovations will be completed before our event, so we are really excited to see their plans come to life and into fruition for our event. This is something that we definitely need for Orange County."

Tran also lauded the service she experienced at the Hotel Irvine when she recently held a meeting there. "When I arrived at the valet, the gentlemen who were former Hyatt employees recognized me by name. And they always park our co-founders' cars up front." She asked them how they knew to do that. "Their response was 'Oh, we recognized them.' We hadn't been there in six months. That, to me, is very impressive."

## San Diego

The Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina recently completed a \$1.7 million renovation of its food and beverage venues to enhance the guest experience. The project included a redesign of the hotel's signature dining venue, Harbor's Edge restaurant and lounge, and an expansion of Tapatini Bar.

After a \$15 million transformation project, The Westin San Diego now features 436 upgraded guest rooms and the hotel's restaurant, lobby, bar, lounge and meeting space have all been revitalized. The project also included the installation of a vertical garden wall in the lobby designed to improve air quality and create a relaxing environment. Perhaps at the other end of the spectrum are the hotel's self-described "War Rooms," private spaces designed by lawyers for lawyers as places to prepare for trials, conduct dispositions and briefings and conduct other legal meetings.

The iconic US Grant Hotel located in the city's Gaslamp Quarter, dates back to 1910. The hotel has now partnered with a group called On Demand Lifestyles to offer an exclusive fitness package to meeting groups. One option they offer is to schedule a group workout during breakout sessions. Also, with at least 10 days' notice, attendees can select a personal trainer who will create a customized workout that can be completed in the guest's room, in the hotel's fitness center or while out and about in the city.

Perched atop the San Diego Marriott Gaslamp Quarter, Altitude Sky Lounge, touted as "the West Coast's highest open-air rooftop venue" — 22 stories above street level — now also offers an indoor venue called City Sights. The new addition features a glass-walled balcony, affording the same panoramic views of the city, San Diego Bay and MLB's Petco Park no matter what the weather.



VISIT *Newport*  
BEACH  
CALIFORNIA

*REWARDING FIRST-CLASS PROGRAMS*

*Redefine how RFPs can work for you.*

*\$100  
gift card*

Visit Newport Beach Inc. will send you a **\$100 Nordstrom Gift Card** just for submitting a qualified RFP\* requiring 50 cumulative rooms or more to a Visit Newport Beach Inc. Representative.

*\$250  
gift card*

Book an event sourced through Visit Newport Beach Inc. and you'll receive a **\$250 American Express\* Gift Card**.

*Live  
the  
Dream  
sweepstakes*

You'll automatically be entered in our "Live The Dream" Sweepstakes\* for a chance to win the ideal **Newport Beach getaway**, with airfare for two, a 7-day beach house rental, luxury rental car, yacht cruise and shopping experience, plus more.



**Reap your rewards today – VisitNewportBeach.com/dream or call 800-942-6278.**

BALBOA BAY RESORT | FAIRMONT NEWPORT BEACH | HYATT REGENCY NEWPORT BEACH | ISLAND HOTEL NEWPORT BEACH | NEWPORT BEACH MARRIOTT BAYVIEW  
NEWPORT BEACH MARRIOTT HOTEL & SPA | NEWPORT DUNES WATERFRONT RESORT & MARINA | RADISSON HOTEL NEWPORT BEACH

\*No Purchase Necessary. Open to legal residents of the fifty (50) United States and District of Columbia who are 21 years of age or older at time of entry and are employed as a professional meeting or event planner. To enter online, for complete official rules and/or to learn how to enter offline, go to [www.visitnewportbeach.com/dream](http://www.visitnewportbeach.com/dream). Ends 12/31/14. Void where prohibited. A qualified RFP consists of 50 rooms or more for a single meeting, one year history required, one gift card per program, gift card issued upon conversion to solid lead in a participating Newport Beach hotel, RFP must be sourced directly through a Visit Newport Beach representative. American Express Gift Cards are useable at locations that accept American Express Cards. Some limitations apply. Subject to complete Official Rules. Sponsor: Visit Newport Beach, Inc., 1600 Newport Center Drive, Suite 120, Newport Beach, CA 92660.



## Los Angeles

Universal Studios Hollywood in Los Angeles is making an unprecedented five-year investment in new thrill rides and expansive themed environments. The most significant undertaking in the theme park's 50-year history began in 2012 with the introduction of the Transformers: The Ride — 3D. Universal Plaza, a 37,000-sf art deco-styled piazza, debuted last summer, and Despicable Me Minion Mayhem and Super Silly Fun Land opens this month. Springfield, an immersive land surrounding The Simpsons Ride, will open in spring 2015, and Fast & Furious — Supercharged, based on the blockbuster film series, will be introduced in summer 2015 as the grand finale to the Studio Tour. The



Credit: Anaheim Convention Center

Above: The Anaheim Convention Center's Grand Plaza was the site of a recent event for ConferenceDirect. Inset: Rendering of the center's 200,000 sf expansion to be completed in 2016.

Wizarding World of Harry Potter, similar to the themed land at Universal Orlando Resort in Florida, debuts in 2016.

Convention business is booming in Los Angeles. With 29 shows already booked into the Los Angeles Convention Center as of February, the center is on track to achieve its highest performance in a decade. "Los Angeles is hot right now," says Ernest Wooden Jr., president and CEO of the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board (LATCB). "Groups that are meeting here are finding they need to expand their room blocks because the destination's drawing power is ballooning show attendance."

The LATCB credits part of the city's popularity to its new lineup of hotels that are coming on board. It says that 10 new hotels are now under construction, which will add 2,135 to the city's inventory by the end of the year. The LATCB further reports that 25 hotels are in various stages of planning, which will bring nearly 5,000 new rooms to the city by 2017. These include a 900-room Wilshire Grand and a Residence Inn and Courtyard by Marriott under one roof.

The 180-room Ace Hotel, which recently opened in downtown L.A., is the hip new place to stay. Part of a new hotel

group based in Portland, OR, the Ace Hotel is located in the historic United Artists building that was built for the film studio in 1927. The meeting space at the Ace is anything but your typical breakouts and ballrooms. Take The Theatre at Ace Hotel as an example. It's a 1,600-seat movie palace from the 1920s with a three-story, 2,300-sf grand lobby. The theater's ceiling sparkles with thousands of tiny mirrors. There's also Segovia Hall, named for the Spanish cathedral that inspired Mary Pickford's vision for the United Artists Theatre. This opulent space can be used as one large room or divided into three smaller rooms.

The Los Angeles Convention Center (LACC) contains 720,000 sf of exhibit space, as well as 64 meeting rooms and a 299-seat theater. It also offers advanced fiber-optic, power and data/network systems along with spacious, sunlit lobbies, three food courts and a full-service business center. The LACC also is conveniently located near popular sports and entertainment venues, including LA Live and the Staples Center.

## Anaheim

The big news in Anaheim is the recently announced plan to expand the Anaheim Convention Center. The \$180 million, 200,000-sf expansion project will create a state-of-the-art multipurpose, flexible meeting and exhibit space. The development will involve the replacement of existing parking spaces, the addition of new loading docks, vehicular entrance and a climate-controlled pedestrian bridge that will connect to the existing facility. The project, which represents the seventh expansion in the convention center's 47-year history, is slated to begin late summer of 2014 and is expected to be completed by fall of 2016.

Today, the 1.6-million-sf facility is the largest convention center on the West Coast. The center features 815,000 sf of exhibit space, 130,000 sf of meeting space and an array of outdoor function space that includes the 100,000-sf Grand Plaza, which opened January 2013.

Future hotel development plans could add 2,400 hotel rooms to the Anaheim Resort area's 25,000 rooms within the next six years.

The iconic Disneyland Hotel, which opened in 1955, is conveniently located near Disneyland and the Disney California Adventure Park, and the Downtown Disney shopping, dining and entertainment complex. The hotel has revamped its 969 guest rooms through what it calls a "modern makeover with a magical twist." The rooms now have a contemporary look and feature classic Disney artwork and memorabilia. The hotel's new courtyard complex features two new private-event lawns that offer a total of 20,000 sf of space.

The property has a 136,000-sf convention center, including the 18,000-sf Disney Grand Ballroom, which features a built-in stage, full lighting and sound capabilities, and a private pre-



Credit: San Francisco Travel and B Restaurant & Bar



B Restaurant & Bar sits atop Moscone North and has an outdoor terrace overlooking Yerba Buena Gardens and the San Francisco skyline.

function area. The hotel also recently unveiled the Blue Sky Suite, a 3,000-sf purpose-built meetings suite offering three different meeting environments designed to encourage creative "blue sky thinking," built-in AV and complimentary Wi-Fi. It can accommodate meetings for up to 15 people.

## San Francisco

The Moscone Center which is comprised of Moscone North, South and West, covers more than 2 million sf and includes more than 700,000 sf of exhibit space, more than 100 meeting rooms and nearly 123,000 sf of prefunction areas. The three-level convention facility covers most of a city block in downtown San Francisco. The center has finished a two-year, \$56 million renovation of the North and South buildings, which offer a total of 1.2 million sf of space. The project included a

new wireless system that provides high-speed Internet for up to 60,000 devices simultaneously.

Future expansion plans call for the addition of 200,000 sf of flexible meeting space to the North and South buildings. Construction for the \$500 million project is anticipated to begin this December with completion expected in summer 2018. Plans include a 50,000-sf ballroom and an enclosed pedestrian bridge connecting Moscone Center above Howard Street.

Moscone was the site of a unique program planned by Penny Fondy, principal of Wit's End Productions, headquartered in Roswell, GA. "We worked on an event that was in conjunction with a game developers' conference," she explains. "It was for a corporate client who was interested in gamification and learning about that, so they asked us to organize and produce a 'hackathon.' So we engaged game developers, and they all



## Get Your Bytes HERE

Meetings are all about connections and networks, and in San Jose we have you covered two times over! Our new *Wickedly Fast WiFi* plugs you and your attendees into the nation's fastest free downtown WiFi network. And with over 200 restaurants and nightlife hot spots, we'll keep your attendees networking face-to-face long after your final session. Call us today to book your next meeting here.

**Book a meeting today!**

sanjose.org  
800.SAN.JOSE

**SanJose**  
Innovation starts here





Credit: Moscone Center

Rendering of a 200,000-sf expansion at San Francisco's Moscone Center, scheduled for completion in 2018.

essentially got into a room and created games and wrote code for the games. At the end, it was judged to see which person won. It was pretty complex to plan it, actually. That was a very different event for us. Usually what we do is very corporate.

"It worked out great. It was perfect," she adds. Fondy had high praise for the staff at Moscone. "I found them to be exceedingly professional, helpful and responsive. They have a way of working. They have a system. They have everything down. It was a pleasure. That part of it was seamless."

Fondy also was recently asked by a client to find a unique venue near Moscone Center for a private event for a group of C-level executives. After doing her research, she submitted a list of possibilities to her client. "The client selected one of the venues and is very, very happy," Fondy says. The winning choice was B Restaurant & Bar. The contemporary-styled venue sits atop Moscone North and has an outdoor terrace overlooking Yerba Buena Gardens and the San Francisco skyline. The venue can accommodate a wide range of events, from a private wine dinner to a cocktail party for 400.

San Francisco Travel, a private, not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1909 to market the city as a destination, has recently made several staff changes to enhance its service

to meeting planners. One of these changes is the promotion of Oleg Nakonechny to director, convention services. One of his goals will be to create an updated process for the hundreds of site inspections the city hosts each year.

The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco recently announced plans to renovate its 23,000 sf of meeting space. The project, which is expected to be completed in the fall, will include updates to the hotel's Grand Ballroom, Terrace Room, conference rooms and boardrooms.

## San Jose

Team San Jose has been a key driver for many planners who have used the destination in recent years. Unlike many CVBs, which hand off a planner to any number of other contacts after a meeting is initially booked, Team San Jose provides comprehensive, fully integrated support services in housing, event services, food and beverage, permitting, marketing support and technical consultation.

The city's compact downtown area also offers a nice assort-



*"(The Monterey CVB) accommodates each individual client's needs. I appreciate that. Here, we always feel like a top priority."*

**Kim Huerta**, Senior Manager, Store Operations, West Marine, Watsonville, CA

ment of excellent restaurants, museums, performing arts venues and hotels with sophisticated facilities because of its role as the business hub of Silicon Valley. One example is the upscale Silicon Valley Capitol Club, which offers indoor-outdoor space for 300 attendees and 360-degree views of downtown.

There's a wide array of other unique offsite venues in San



Credit: San Jose CVB

A 125,000-sf expansion of the San Jose Convention Center was completed last fall.



# THE | EXPERIENCE

## | NEED CONVENIENCE

Sunny Irvine, in the Heart of Southern California  
Shuttle to John Wayne Airport, Just Minutes Away

## | LIKE OPTIONS

Many Versatile Venue Choices, Indoors & Out  
Largest Ballroom in Orange County

## | WANT TO EXPLORE

Endless Activities; Shopping, Beach, Golf & More  
Close to Attractions & Sporting Events

With Personalized Service That Revolves Solely Around You  
Call 866.900.6649 | [hotelirvine.com](http://hotelirvine.com)

**HOTEL | IRVINE**  
JAMBOREE CENTER





Jose that take advantage of the city's 300 days of sunshine a year. For example, the San Jose Museum of Art can host an indoor-outdoor event for up to 3,000; and the San Pedro Square Market, half a mile from the convention center, offers indoor-outdoor space for receptions with up to 1,850 attendees. The Tech Museum offers a rooftop terrace for 150 and 132,000 sf of gallery and meeting space for up to 2,500. Planners looking for a mid-sized theater will be delighted with the 3,036-seat, newly renamed City National Civic, a 1936 city landmark concert venue, which reopened in 2012 after a four-year renovation.

The expansion and renovation of the San Jose Convention Center (SJCC) was completed last fall. The project added nearly 125,000 sf of new space including 38,706 sf of additional meeting space and a 35,110-sf Grand Ballroom. The SJCC also upgraded its technology, improved the arrival experience for attendees and improved service levels by making changes to the way the back of the house functions. The convention center now offers a total of 550,000 sf of convention space and 305,000 sf of exhibition space.

## Monterey

Kim Huerta, senior manager for store operations for West Marine, plans an annual internal meeting in Monterey. For the past several years, the event has been held at the Portola Hotel & Spa and the adjacent Monterey Conference Center.



Table setting in front of the Kelp Forest Windows at Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Credit: © Monterey Bay Aquarium/Tyson V. Rininger

This March, the event was attended by 500 internal associates and 200 of the company's vendor partners.

"It's convenient to our corporate headquarters," Huerta explains. "We're located in Watsonville and Monterey is very close. The size of the hotel meets our needs. The Portola Hotel is not too large and not too small. The hotel staff has been really fantastic — the management as well as everyone from the bellmen to room service."

West Marine didn't host any off-site events this year, but in the past they have used the Monterey Bay Aquarium. "They do a wonderful job with events," she describes.

Huerta also worked with the Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) and found

them to be very responsive. "It's a smaller town, so you get more personal service," she notes. "They accommodate each individual client's needs. I appreciate that. If you go to some of the bigger markets, you're just another convention. Here, we always feel like a top priority," she continues. "We are happy to partner with Monterey, the conference center and the Portola Hotel."

In an overwhelmingly positive vote — more than 90 percent — Monterey hotel owners approved a plan to tax themselves to pay for a projected \$32.3 million renovation and improvement project for the Monterey Conference Center. The next step calls for city staff to issue requests for proposals for project management, and design and architectural services.

The MCCVB is offering a "Fly-See-Book" promotion that allows qualified planners who submit an RFP the opportunity to receive roundtrip airfare (up to \$500), a customized site inspection, hotel accommodations, ground transportation and meals.

## Golden State Demand

There's no doubt that the interest in California as a destination is high. According to a recent report from *Hotel News Now*, California was a market of choice in 2013 for hotel investors. One of the factors cited for investor interest is "a very strong demand story" which, as it appears is true of meeting and event planners, as well.

C&IT



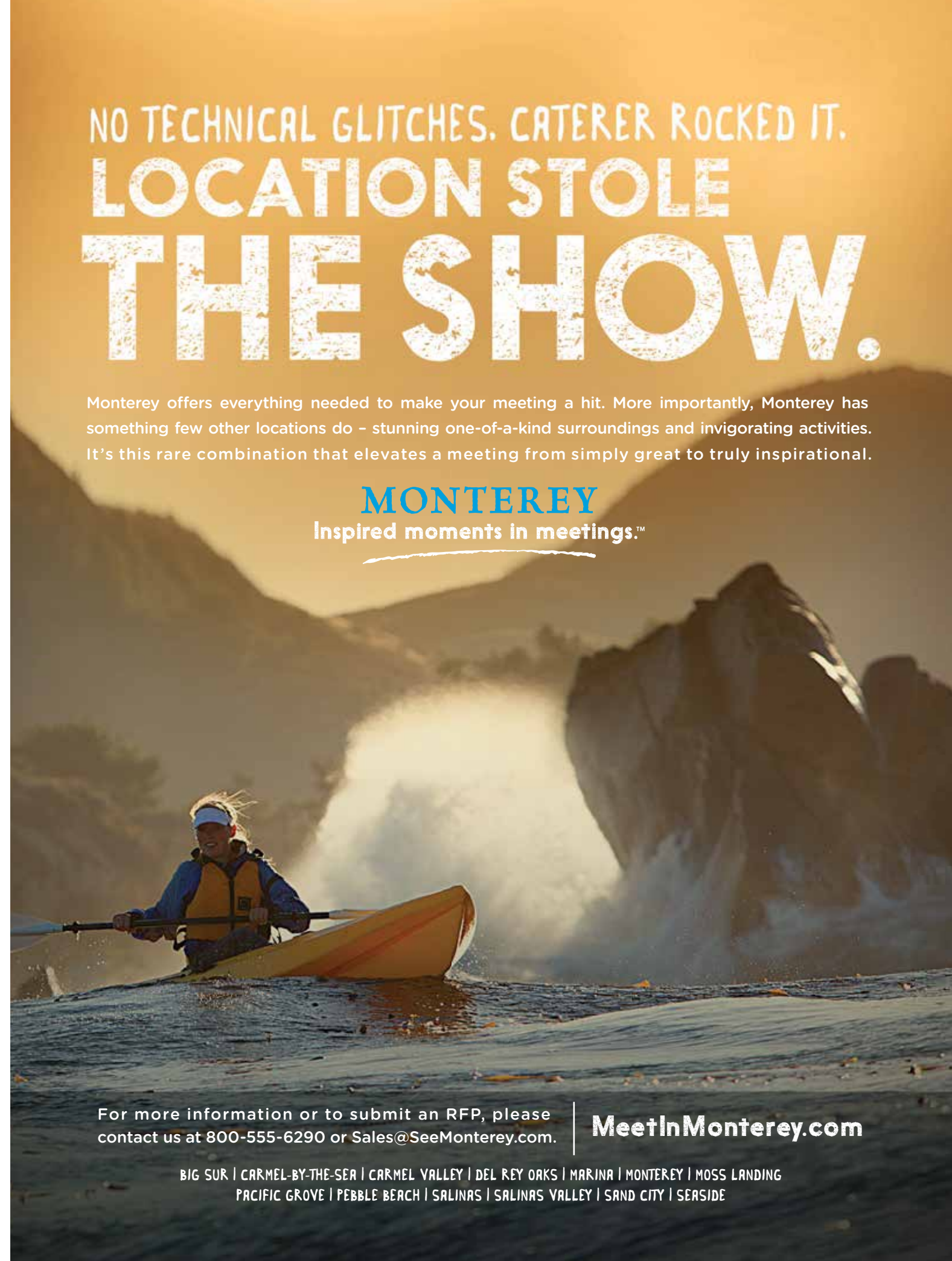
Credit: Scott Campbell

For the past several years, West Marine has held its annual internal meeting at the Portola Hotel & Spa (above) and the adjacent Monterey Conference Center.

# NO TECHNICAL GLITCHES. CATERER ROCKED IT. LOCATION STOLE THE SHOW.

Monterey offers everything needed to make your meeting a hit. More importantly, Monterey has something few other locations do — stunning one-of-a-kind surroundings and invigorating activities. It's this rare combination that elevates a meeting from simply great to truly inspirational.

**MONTEREY**  
Inspired moments in meetings.™



For more information or to submit an RFP, please contact us at 800-555-6290 or [Sales@SeeMonterey.com](mailto:Sales@SeeMonterey.com).

**MeetInMonterey.com**

BIG SUR | CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA | CARMEL VALLEY | DEL REY OAKS | MARINA | MONTEREY | MOSS LANDING  
PACIFIC GROVE | PEBBLE BEACH | SALINAS | SALINAS VALLEY | SAND CITY | SEASIDE



## ON THE MOVE



BUCK

Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, near Traverse City, MI, has named **Ryan Buck** as director of sales. He was complex director of group sales for W Hotels of Chicago, IL.

JW Marriott Houston Downtown has appointed **Dawn Schuller** as senior sales manager. She was a corporate sales manager at the Four Seasons Hotel Houston.

**Brian D. Macaluso** was named director of sales and marketing for Taj Boston. He was task force director, sales and marketing, Starwood Hotels & Resorts.



LUCE

**Shand Luce** was promoted to director of sales and marketing for The Depot Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel and The Residence Inn at The Depot Hotel. He was director of operations for The Depot Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel.

The Anaheim/Orange County (CA) Visitor & Convention Bureau has named **Dana Pickle** as director of convention sales for the Central region. She was a national account executive for the Greater Houston CVB. **Kara Bowman** was named director of meeting sales, mid-Atlantic region. She was account director



DIAZ

for Tourism Toronto. **Victoria Diaz** was promoted to director of meeting sales, Eastern region. She was client services manager for the bureau.

Visit Indy, Indianapolis, IN, has named **Daren Kingi** as senior V.P. sales. He was V.P. sales western mountain Pacific area for Marriott International.

Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, Tucson, AZ, has named **Ryan Bunker** as director of sales and marketing. He was director of sales and marketing at Tucson Marriott University Park. **C&IT**



KINGI



BUNKER

## READER SERVICES / AD INDEX

PAGE	ADVERTISER	PHONE NO.	WEB SITE	CONTACT	E-MAIL
COV IV	Disney Meetings	321-939-7129	www.disneymeetings.com	Group Sales	meetings@disneyworld.com
31	DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld	407-345-0056	www.doubletreeorlando seaworld.com	Steven Green	steven.green@pyramidhotelgroup.com
47	Hotel Irvine Jamboree Center	949-225-6760	www.hotelirvine.com	Scott Bruno	groupsalesleads@hotelirvine.com
COV II	Mexico Tourism Board	202-265-9020	www.visitmexico.com/meetings	Cecilia Cruz	ccruz@visitmexico.com
49	Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau	831-657-6416	www.meetInmonterey.com	Group Sales	sales@seemonterey.com
37	Rosen Hotels & Resorts	407-996-9939	www.rosenhôtels.com	Leslie Menichini	sales@rosenhôtels.com
15	Sandals Luxury Meetings & Incentives Collection	800-239-2484	www.sandals.com	James M. Bullock	groups@uvi.sandals.com
45	Team San Jose	408-SAN-JOSE	www.sanjose.org	Mark McMinn	mmcmminn@sanjose.org
5	Tourism Australia	310-695-3207	www.events.australia.com	Samantha Holmes	sholmes@tourism.australia.com
35	Universal Orlando Resort	888-322-5531	www.uomeetingsandevents.com	Group Sales	meetings@universalorlando.com
43	Visit Newport Beach	949-467-2752	www.visitnewportbeach.com	Michelle Donahue	michelle@visitnewportbeach.com
39	Visit Orlando	800-662-2825	www.orlandomeeting.com	Donna Morse	convention.sales@orlandocvb.com
21	Visit Seattle	206-461-5800	www.visitseattle.org	Group Sales	conventions@visitseattle.org
33	Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel	800-524-4939	www.swandolphinmeetings.com	Jared McLachlan	meetings@swandolphin.com
13	The Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa	800-677-6338	www.westinlapalomaresort.com	Group Sales	info@westinlapalomaresort.com

[www.themeetingmagazines.com](http://www.themeetingmagazines.com)

MEET THE  
WORLD HERE

Meet with over 3,000 industry professionals from across the globe.

NETWORK AND  
CONNECT HERE

Meet face-to-face and make connections that matter.

TOP LEVEL  
DECISION MAKERS  
MEET HERE

BE INSPIRED  
HERE

Stay at the forefront of the industry and discover the latest trends and hot topics.

AIBTM. The event that's proven to deliver a return on investment.

Join over 3,000 industry professionals at one of the leading global exhibitions for the U.S. meetings and events, incentive and business travel industry. AIBTM creates the perfect platform for face-to-face meetings, networking and three days of unlimited business opportunities. AIBTM's unique Hosted Buyer Program offers top level decision makers a forum where they can be inspired by thought-provoking, CEU accredited education and connect with an array of exhibitors from across the globe.

AIBTM. Top Level Decision Makers Meet Here.

To register as a Trade Buyer or Apply to be a Hosted Buyer, visit: [www.aibtm.com/register](http://www.aibtm.com/register)



INCENTIVES, BUSINESS  
TRAVEL & MEETINGS  
EXPO | AMERICA  
June 10-12, 2014 • Orlando, USA



# Let Disney Bring Your Incentive Experiences to Life



At the heart of every incentive experience is a message. Told well, it becomes a story. Told by Disney, it becomes unforgettable. Thousands of meeting planners trust Disney to reward and engage their top performers through our unique ability to blend business, entertainment and one-of-a-kind creative resources and create memories that last a lifetime.

Learn more at [Disneymeetings.com](http://Disneymeetings.com)

FLORIDA

CALIFORNIA

HAWAII

HONG KONG

PARIS



THE WONDERFUL  
WORLD OF MEETINGS



©Disney CS-14-31524