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# CORPORATE & INCENTIVE TRAVEL

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

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## Orlando No. 1 for Meetings

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## Gaming Resorts

Properties Are Winning Meetings With  
New Facilities and Amenities

PAGE 14



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The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas is home to The Joint — a popular 4,000-seat showroom. **PAGE 14**



Special sustainability events at the Monterey Bay Aquarium include this Cooking for Solutions function. **PAGE 54**



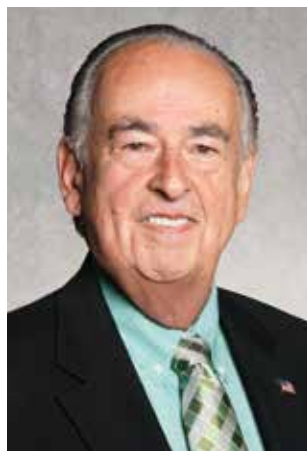
Uluru Aboriginal Tours entertains visitors at Ayers Rock in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Northern Territory, Australia. **PAGE 66**



# Publisher's Message

## 'When We Meet — We Change the World'

Thanks and a tip of the hat to Paul Van Deventer, president and CEO of Meeting Professionals International (MPI) who recently presided at MPI's European Meetings & Events Conference (EMEC) in Granada, Spain. I was so impressed with many of his remarks that I want to share some of his excerpts here. Let me know what you think, too:



"When we meet, we change the world. When we meet we change the world is core to our purpose; it's the inspiration for the work that we do and the output of all of our efforts. Face-to-face meetings drive innovation, change political discourse, stimulate economic development and for me, most importantly, they enhance cultural understanding and awareness.

"And to meet requires the free movement of people — the enablement and encouragement of travel and tourism. And a threat to that free-flow of people and thus our incredible industry, and the innovation we drive is the growing prevalence of nationalist or isolationist movements — many fueled by populist beliefs.

"So, we have an obligation. An obligation to tell the story of the value of face-to-face meetings, and the many intangible benefits of travel. We need to encourage and facilitate the free-flow of travel. Because travel is such a powerful tool for understanding and such a powerful antidote to hate and intolerance.

"As Mark Twain once so insightfully said, 'Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness — and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts.'

"I would say that as educated, aware individuals we have an obligation and a self-interest to tell the value story of the live events industry. If not for the innovation and progress driven by our industry, then at a minimum the pure economic impact. Live events drive massive economic returns and job growth, with nearly \$700 billion spent globally in annual direct meeting and event expenditures. And the dollars invested in live events have one of the strongest and most proven ROIs for the organizations investing them. For every dollar spent on meetings, they deliver nearly \$10 to top-line revenues and \$3 of net profit.

"So for our industry, for our local economies and for ourselves, let's all become well versed in telling the compelling value story of live events!"

Harvey Grotsky  
Publisher

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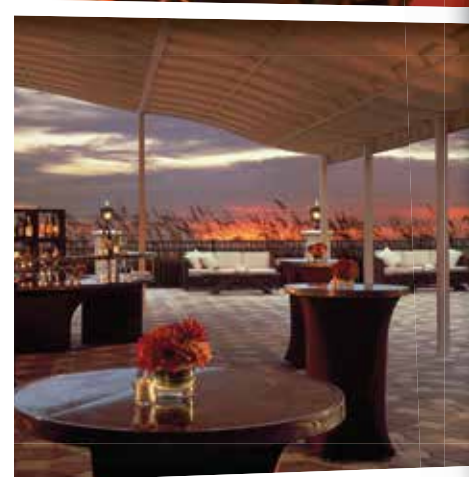
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## News & Notes

### Icahn Selling Trump Taj Mahal Casino to Hard Rock International

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ — Billionaire investor Carl Icahn reached a deal March 1 to sell the shuttered Trump Taj Mahal casino in Atlantic City to Hard Rock International and two New Jersey investors, according to Meet AC. “We are excited to be part of this revitalization of Atlantic City creating thousands of jobs to help local employment,” Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International, said in a statement. “We are 100 percent convinced Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Atlantic City will be a success.” He said the company plans to invest \$300 million in renovating and rebranding the property. Icahn, who also owns Atlantic City’s Tropicana Casino and Resort, said he decided one casino in town is enough. He said in January he had lost about \$300 million owning the Taj Mahal and would be delighted if he could sell it for half that amount. [www.meetac.com](http://www.meetac.com)

### SITE and MPI Announce Co-located 2018 Event in Rome

CHICAGO and DALLAS — The Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) and Meeting Professionals International (MPI) have joined forces to provide a new, enhanced experience for global meetings and incentive professionals at the SITE + MPI Global Forum set for January 12–14, 2018, at the Rome Cavalieri Waldorf Astoria, Rome, Italy.



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The forum brings together the power of two industry-leading global brands to share industry trends, offer innovative and relevant education and provide a collaborative environment for networking and business exchanges. “As past-chair of MPI, I am excited about this opportunity to collaborate with MPI on the Global Forum, which will quickly become one of the most important industry events in Europe in 2018,” said SITE CEO Kevin Hinton, CIS. “SITE and MPI share many members, and by combining our otherwise competing events, we are making it easier for members to attend one event versus having to choose between two.”

“We look forward to partnering with SITE to deliver a strong and innovative program for Global Forum next year. This collaboration is just one example of our strategic priority to expand MPI educational offerings within Europe, and we believe our members in the region will welcome the opportunity to learn and network alongside SITE members,” said Paul Van Deventer, president and CEO of MPI. [www.mpiweb.org/global-forum](http://www.mpiweb.org/global-forum)

### ADMEI Announces 2017 Excellence Awards



Attendees at the ADMEI annual conference in Barcelona, Spain, included (l to r) Jill DiMarco, Access New Orleans; Alayna Alariana, CSI-DC; Jill Tate, Jamie Hellesen and Claudia Hankowski, Corinthian Events; Alaina Hee, AlliedPRA Hawaii; Nicole Marsh, AXS Group; Nancy Matos, Group Services Inc; Terry Epton, Hosts New Orleans; Sara Daniele, Heather Williams, Giulia Brochetto and Gaia Terrazzi, +39 events.

DAYTON, OH — ADMEI announced the winners of the 2017 Excellence Awards at the 12th annual Awards

Gala at the annual conference in Barcelona, Spain. Winners include: Excellence in Cultural and Tradition

Integration: Taste & Tunes of Louisiana, Access New Orleans; Excellence in Entertainment Production: Anchors Aweigh, CSI Washington, DC; Excellence in Event Décor/Design: Choose to Smooth, Corinthian Events, a Global DMC Partner, Boston, MA; Excellence in Incentive Travel Programming or Service: The Big Kahuna - Riding Two Waves, AlliedPRA Hawaii, Honolulu, HI; Excellence in Meeting Services: A New Way to Meet, Hosts New Orleans, a Hosts Global Alliance Member, New Orleans, LA; Excellence in Site Inspection and Technical Production: Kickoff Event Olympus South Europe, +39Italy, a Hosts Global Alliance Member, Milan, Italy; Comcast Business 8th President’s Club - Site Inspection Visit, Group Services Inc. a Hosts Global Alliance Member, San Juan, PR. [www.admei.org](http://www.admei.org)

### Rosewood Baha Mar to Open in 2018

NEW YORK, NY — Rosewood Hotels & Resorts has been appointed by the Bahamian subsidiary of Hong Kong-based development company Chow Tai Fook Enterprises (CTFE) to operate and manage Rosewood Baha Mar in Nassau, Bahamas, which will open in spring 2018. Set on the gorgeous white sands of Nassau’s Cable Beach, Rosewood Baha Mar will be a sanctuary of exclusivity, located within the stunning Baha Mar Resort multiproperty oasis in the Caribbean.

Featuring elegant British colonial architecture and interior styling, the resort will offer 185 oceanview rooms and suites, as well as five luxurious beachfront villas, which will be contemporary and residential in style. All guest rooms will boast private balconies with outdoor living areas.

Eight meeting and event spaces will provide the perfect setting for corporate meetings, retreats and incentives. The venues, including a 4,950-sf ballroom, meeting room, boardrooms, private dining room and two al fresco event areas, will offer exquisite catering, refined service and state-of-the-art technology. [www.rosewoodhotels.com](http://www.rosewoodhotels.com)

### MGM Resorts Inks Historic Meetings Deal With Microsoft

LAS VEGAS, NV — A new multiyear agreement between Microsoft Corp. and MGM Resorts International is a first for both companies and a major win for Las Vegas. To MGM Resorts, the deal represents the largest single-corporation meeting event ever hosted by the leading global entertainment company. To Microsoft, it marks the first time the computer giant has combined four separate annual events, with as many as 30,000 participants, into one signature meeting.

“With this contract, MGM Resorts is poised to deliver our third record-breaking meetings and conventions year in a row,” said Michael Dominguez, senior vice president and chief sales officer for MGM Resorts. “The selection by Microsoft of Las Vegas and of MGM Resorts is incredibly exciting. Not only is this a mark of confidence in our brand, but it offers continued evidence that Las Vegas is viewed as the leading purveyor of mainstream entertainment worldwide. We believe this is the beginning of many more noteworthy developments to come.”

Las Vegas, recently named the World’s Leading Meeting & Conference Destination by the World Travel Awards, continues to break records, including 6.3 million delegates traveling to the destination in 2016. [www.mgmresorts.com](http://www.mgmresorts.com)



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## News & Notes

### Associated Luxury Hotels Acquires Europe-Based Worldhotels

ORLANDO, FL — Associated Luxury Hotels has significantly expanded its global footprint, its member hotels and resorts, and its worldwide sales, marketing and hospitality services with the acquisition of Frankfurt, Germany-based Worldhotels. Headquartered in Orlando, Florida, Associated Luxury Hotels owns and operates Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI), a leading independent global sales organization serving the North American meetings and incentive marketplace for 30 years. Worldhotels remains focused on serving individual business travelers, leisure travelers, meeting groups and providing loyalty solutions for its 350 member hotels and resorts, offering 75,000 rooms in 65 countries worldwide. ALHI will continue concentrating on the North American meetings, incentives and conventions marketplace for its membership of more than 250 luxury-level independent hotels and resorts worldwide totaling 138,500 rooms.

Associated Luxury Hotels' Chairman David Gabri said the company will operate ALHI and Worldhotels as separate divisions. [www.alhi.com](http://www.alhi.com)

### Global DMC Partners Offers Event Tech Solutions Through Giant iTab

WASHINGTON, DC — Global DMC Partners, the largest global network of Destination Management Companies (DMCs), and Giant iTab, a touchscreen solution for digital engagement at events, announce a new strategic partnership. Global DMC Partners will offer Giant iTab solutions as an additional global event service. Built on the revolution in smartphone and tablet technology, Giant iTab takes existing client content and replicates it on a Giant Touchscreen with all the iconic design, gesture controls and user benefits of popular handheld devices. Clients can use the solutions to bring together all their marketing and promotional elements into one seamless, multichannel digital presentation. Giant iTab's solutions are available to rent worldwide in a combination of types and sizes and come with full installation and support service. Meeting planners can use Giant iTab's digital solutions to display event show guides, floor plans, agendas, attendee lists, speaker information, visitor check-in, collect customer feedback, social media feeds and much more. [www.globaldmcpartners.com](http://www.globaldmcpartners.com)

### Anaheim Marriott Goes Solar, Fueling Guest Rooms Via Renewable Energy

ANAHEIM, CA — The Anaheim Marriott has announced the completion of a major investment in renewable energy, with the installation of a commercial solar system placed on three portions of the hotel roof. The industry-leading system was recently activated, and it currently fuels the daily power needs of nearly one-third of the property's 1,030 guest rooms. Positioned above the Platinum, Grand and Marquis Ballrooms, the new photovoltaic system features 1,805 solar modules. It is projected to produce 880,000 kilowatt hours of power per year, generating a reduction in annual hotel energy consumption equal to the elimination of a year's greenhouse gas emissions from 131 passenger vehicles, or the CO2 emissions of 68,168 gallons of gasoline consumed. [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)

### TS Tech Summit Set for Las Vegas in April

DALLAS, TX — The 2017 TS Tech Summit, now in its seventh year, will turn perceived "hard-to-crack" secrets of technology into "easy-to-apply" tools for event and meeting planners, April 20–23 at Caesars Palace Las Vegas. "Professional planners must learn to manage



JAMES

events around the world with the touch of a finger, especially when managing multimillion-dollar budgets," according to Ann Windham James, founder of TS Tech Summit and owner of Imagine Xhibits & Events. "Learning to apply the best technology also takes practice, so we provide a safe, exciting place to practice the tools and customize solutions for events, meetings and trade shows."

Full and partial education grants and discounts for planners are now available at [www.tstechsummit.com](http://www.tstechsummit.com). The TS Tech Summit is supported by MPI, IAEE and SPIN for Certified CE Courses for CEM, CMM and CMP industry certifications. Qualified event planners in attendance manage budgets from \$3 million–\$30 million annual spend.

The TS Tech Summit provides training in small groups with expert-led workshops, hands-on demonstrations and a trade show with cutting edge tools, along with peer-to-peer networking. Planners can apply for full or partial scholarships at [www.tstechsummit.com](http://www.tstechsummit.com). Because of its small, customized design, the summit breaks down barriers for planners to learn about much-needed technology tools in an intimate atmosphere, and the Summit encourages building meaningful relationships with colleagues and tech suppliers. [www.tstechsummit.com](http://www.tstechsummit.com)

## Snapshots



Credits: 1-6 Chuck Fazio; 8 Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort

**1-6** Destination and Travel Foundation Chairman Joe Marinelli and DMAI President and CEO Don Welsh said more than \$500,000 was raised at DMAI's 2017 Spirit of Hospitality Celebration. **3** Peter Yesawich, (l) vice chairman of MMGY Global and Rossi Ralenkotter, president and CEO of the Las Vegas CVA, were honored for their leadership and vision. Enjoying the festivities at DAR Constitution Hall are (l to r) **1** Chris Thompson of Brand USA and Welsh; **2** Amir Eylon of Longwoods International; Mark McMinn of Monterey County CVB; Cleo Battle of Greater Louisville CVB; Tammy Blount of Monterey County CVB; and Joe Marinelli of Visit Savannah; **4** Bill Hanbury of Academy Street Collaboration; Elliott Ferguson of Destination DC; and Mike Gamble of SearchWide; **5** Welsh and The Fray; and **6** ASAE's John Graham (l) and friends. **7** (l to r) Harvey Grotzky, publisher of *Corporate & Incentive Travel*, Patrick O'Donovan, T.D., Ireland's minister of state for tourism & sport, and Alison Metcalfe, Tourism Ireland's E.V.P., USA & Canada at "Jump into Ireland" hosted by Tourism Ireland at the Boca Raton Resort & Club, a Waldorf Astoria Resort. **8** In celebration of its 10-year anniversary, Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort hosted a soirée. Pictured (l to r) are: Ted Ratcliff, S.V.P. Hilton management services; Andreas Ioannou, president of Orchestra Resorts; Maria Elena Zapata, owner of the Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort; Jack Seiler, mayor of Fort Lauderdale; Jose Luis Zapata, owner; Leslie Pchola, Hilton area V.P.; and John Allan, general manager of Hilton Fort Lauderdale.



By Gloria Petersen

## How to Deal With Challenging Situations and People With Diplomacy and Civility

**E**ver wish that you could wave a magic wand and everyone would be respectful, civil and accommodating? Unfortunately, uncertain times brings discontent and confusion. Thus, it is more important than ever to deal with people, situations and one's own behavior with diplomacy, dignity, finesse, tact and civility, thereby setting the better example. These are powerful "win-win" words. Here we will revisit the basics of effective communication.

### Why and How

Why? Everyone's basic need is to be respected, validated and liked. However, life happens and things can get out of control. People are human; they react (out of control) or they respond (in control) to a variety of situations. You are responsible for you!

How? Take the first step in handling any situation or individual by employing the appropriate tools: diplomacy, finesse, tact, dignity and civility. We hear these words, but do we know what they mean and how to use them effectively? Keep them in your "interaction tool box" and engage them as preventive measures for diffusing situations that could easily get out of control. This is especially true during these times of political uncertainty and international unrest. How a situation is handled, not the incident itself, is the key to a successful result.

### The Tools You Need

- **Diplomacy** is the skill of managing people, and the ability to communicate in a non-offensive manner. It also is the conduct by government officials to secure safe relations between nations. The way you present your views determines the outcome. When handling sensitive conversation topics or mistakes, a diplomatic approach allows you to remedy the situation without damaging the relationship. Instead of encouraging conflict, diplomacy resolves conflict. It consists of one's mannerisms, demeanor, attitude and timing. Using personal diplomacy is your ability to get your point across without appearing pushy or dictatorial. *Diplomacy is the art of letting somebody else have your way.* — David Frost
- **Dignity** is an individual's self-respect. It is something that

should be given not taken. People need to have a sense of dignity about themselves regardless of what economic background they come from or awkward situation that just occurred. Maintain dignity (keep your head high) when things go wrong.

*Freedom is the open window through which pours the sunlight of the human spirit and human dignity.*

— Herbert Hoover

- **Finesse** is the skillful way you handle a difficult or highly sensitive situation. It is a technique that allows one to create a favorable or win-win result. *It's best if you can do things with a sense of humor and finesse.* — Eartha Kitt
- **Tact** is the act of using gentle (non-offensive) language when dealing with controversial issues. Tact is knowing what to say to avoid giving offense, and how and when to say it. Tact is not just saying what the other party wants to hear, but it is choosing words that are not emotionally charged or confrontational, and are truthful. All the while demonstrating respect for the other person's rank, position, stature, gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, whatever the case may be. Sometimes tact will mean not saying anything at all. *Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy.* — Isaac Newton
- **Civility** is politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech and is associated with good manners. A leader who has mastered civility can maintain balance in a disconnected environment. Civility creates a common bond and a more harmonious work environment. When you do not like someone, yet manage to treat him politely, you are being civil. *Politeness and civility are the best capital ever invested in business.* — P. T. Barnum

### Meeting an Immovable Object

You will come across people who are unchangeable, stubborn and a challenge to work with. Inflexible people use communication to be defensive, obnoxious or rude. They also find it hard to be open to another person's point of view or way of doing things. An authentic professional does not react with the same behavior. It is hard to be difficult with

**“Listen and respect other points of view!”**

someone who is respectful and in control. Keep the lines of communication open until agreements have been made or a situation has been remedied.

Consider the following scenarios:

- **Situation:** You are asked in a meeting to give your opinion about someone else's idea — an idea you do not feel is in the best interest of the organization, and you do not want to endorse it.
- **Diplomatic Answer:** "I appreciate Jim's idea. A strategy that I would like to employ involves..." (The answer should be the same whether this person is present or not.)
- **Situation:** You are caught in a conversation that turns into a political debate on a topic about which you have strong opinions, and you do not want to add to the tension.
- **Diplomatic Answer:** "I have strong feelings here as well; however, I feel it best to dwell on what we can control and keep our focus." (You admit you have strong feelings; however, you elect to demonstrate respect.)

### When to Avoid Politics

Professional meeting planners and their attendees would like to know how to deal with the elephant in the room — politics. They want to know how to avoid conversations that can turn heated and sometimes downright nasty. For instance, a colleague recently asked me how to tactfully avoid political conversations especially when diverse political decisions are creating new challenges and affecting our everyday effectiveness.

I suggested they listen carefully and respect other points of view! This is not easy. Especially when your viewpoint is strong and opposite. An exception may be if the situation warrants a debate, in which case it should be a healthy debate whereby points of view are shared and respected.

Here's another question that is relevant today: How do you avoid crossing the line when the topics of racism, sexism as well as offensive terms always seem to come up?

Stay neutral! Realize that comments have a lot to do with how someone was raised or chooses to behave. Counter with a positive (non-defacing) comment. If you do not plug-in, the comment will lose its momentum.

**C&IT**



**Gloria Petersen, CPP**

The founder and president of Global Protocol Inc., Gloria is an author, trainer and speaker on Professional Presence, Business Etiquette and Protocol. She is a graduate of the Protocol School of Washington and has received numerous certifications. Her four-book series, The Art of Professional Connections and SME training modules represent her 30-year legacy. Learn more at [www.GlobalBusinessProtocol.com](http://www.GlobalBusinessProtocol.com) or email her at [gpetersen@globalprotocol.com](mailto:gpetersen@globalprotocol.com).



By Scott Steinberg

## Corporate Social Media Etiquette: How to Plan an Effective Online Strategy

**S**ocial networks are one of today's most popular forms of online communication, as utilized daily by billions of users worldwide. So it's no surprise to find that many organizations have jumped on the bandwagon as well. However, it's important to note that from an organizational standpoint, certain rules of conduct and best practices with regards to corporate communications, must be observed when conducting outreach via these mediums. As we note in my new book *Netiquette Essentials: New Rules for Minding Your Manners in a Digital World*, (Lulu.com, 2013) planning an effective social strategy doesn't have to be difficult, however. Following, you'll find several hints and tips that can help your organiza-

positively to public dialogue, and add information or insights of worth to social network connections. In every case, be sure that all representatives of your organization who do post are courteous, respectful and customer-focused, as well as cognizant of brand and style guidelines.

Before launching any social media campaign or presence, make a detailed study of the sites, platforms and services where your desired audience can be found, and that best align with your business' long-term goals and objectives. Focusing attention and presence on these sites will help you maximize outreach efforts and user engagement (and use time and resources most wisely), rather than causing you to be spread

“Concentrating your aim makes it easier to **hit your target** than employing a **shotgun strategy**”

tion lead, succeed, communicate more effectively via high-tech channels and generally put your best foot forward online.

Effective social media management is often a full-time job: Customers will expect dialogue not only to flow both ways, but also be timely and frequent — allocate resources, time and manpower accordingly. Ultimately, maintaining consistent, running conversation is key, as is regularly making note of and responding to incoming dialogue.

### Consistency Is Key

Properly utilizing social media necessitates consistent and frequent commentary, and the use of postings that reinforce your expertise and thought leadership. Figure out what level of response (and response time) works best for your organization and commit to it, allocating time and resources accordingly.

Corporate posts do not have to be made by the same individual every time, or an officer of the organization — however, all should maintain a consistent personality, tone and level of value creation. Always be thinking of how you can contribute

thin and participate less effectively across a wider range of vehicles. Frequency and reach are basic marketing principles, as is audience targeting: Concentrating your aim makes it easier to hit your target than employing a shotgun strategy.

Make sure you or your team members have allocated and scheduled enough workday time to respond and engage within various social media communities. If you can't post content or respond to incoming queries in a timely manner, your fans or customers may come to believe that you aren't listening to them. Not responding to a tweet or a Facebook post can be seen by some as the equivalent of not returning a phone call or email — and while you can't always address all, you can at least make efforts to speak to larger trending topics in public forums, helping assuage the broader user community's concerns.

### Study the Networks, Use Compelling Content

Remember that each social network has its own features, personality and community: Study the outlets you participate in, and understand the different nuances so that your

message is not simply carbon-copied across each forum in the exact way. Audiences differ, as do consumption models across social media vehicles: A one-size approach won't work here. However, while social vehicles may vary, make sure your message and brand are consistent and cross-promoted across channels: Establishing a style guide and dedicated social team or member can be tremendously helpful to maintain consistency of tone, image and overall user impression and takeaway.

The more compelling and meaningful the content you share via social media, the more your customers will engage with it. The key question to ask yourself at every turn: “What's in it for them?” Encourage people to communicate, comment and interact with you: One example might include placing a call to action (i.e. a request for viewers' thoughts and feedback) at the bottom of every post. Incentivization is key here — think about the action steps you want readers or viewers to take and what would drive users to take them. Create a two-way conversation that encourages your customers to want to help you promote your message. Simply blasting information out to them is less effective than soliciting their commentary and input.

### Listen, Listen, Listen

Listen to your audience to discover its likes, needs and interests, then provide insights and information to match. The more you help customers, the more they'll become advocates. Loyal and passionate customers should be responded to and engaged with — finding ways to reward and spotlight your community is vitally important. The more you extend the hand of friendship to end users and acknowledge their efforts, the bigger fans they'll become, and the more goodwill you have the opportunity to generate. The key: to always

be up-front and genuine with your audience and afford them the same respect and standing that they afford your business and brand.

Be a good go-to resource. Make sure your content is useful and informative, and give visitors tips, links to helpful articles and sites, and other pertinent information. Likewise, don't be afraid to shout out or partner with outside organizations, individuals and influencers who share common philosophies and interests — win-win is always the way to go. Always make sure your content and outreach initiatives are relevant to, and create worth for, your customers. This necessitates looking at promotional efforts from new angles so that the focus is on them — not you.

Make sure your organization's messages meet specific base criteria before posting, including: Is it fun and imaginative? Is it energetic and enthusiastic? Does it draw attention with cool and exciting details? The goal should be to make content inviting, interactive, and accessible — and to deliver a great deal of small, bite-sized items frequently, while encouraging others to interact with you around these pieces of content. Ask questions, start conversations, and otherwise encourage them to share and participate in dialogue.

Be cognizant of your organization's voice and messaging strategy, and make sure you standardize posts to them. Have a standard messaging cadence as well, and make sure you supervise it, noting that it always can be modified. Keep in mind that social marketing campaigns are based on the idea that you are continuously optimizing, and oftentimes on the fly, as you never know when a specific piece of content will begin to trend. If a post does start to take off in terms of user awareness, be prepared and have a second post with further information ready to go shortly after to keep the conversation running.

C&IT



**Scott Steinberg**

is an award-winning professional speaker and among today's best-known trends experts and futurists. He is the bestselling author of *Netiquette Essentials: New Rules for Minding Your Manners in a Digital World*, *Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself*, *Fearlessly Innovate and Succeed Despite Uncertainty* and *Millennial Marketing: Bridging the Generation Gap*. The founder of *Select* nightlife magazine, and host of “Next Up on NewsWatch,” his website is [www.AKeynoteSpeaker.com](http://www.AKeynoteSpeaker.com).



# Destination Gaming Resorts

Beyond the Casino, Properties Are Winning Meetings With New Facilities and Amenities

By Patrick Simms

For many hotels in today's casino industry, the tag "gaming resorts," while technically appropriate, can be misleading. It suggests a resort whose focus is gaming, but it is clear that most of the resorts in Las Vegas, Atlantic City and numerous other regions are equally focused on dining, shopping and entertainment, as well as top-quality meetings facilities and services. More than ever, planners have confidence that these properties will fully support their event objectives, even when the event has no particular connection to gaming. As the popularized slogan goes, the modern gaming resort "means business" — whether or not it's in Las Vegas.

## In the Game Back East

A prime example is the new, \$1.4 billion MGM National Harbor in National Harbor, Maryland. Opened on December 8, the 308-room resort offers 125,000 sf of state-of-the-art casino space, a 3,000-seat theater, three celebrity chef restaurants among 15 dining options, 18,999 sf of high-end retail and a destination spa. Paired with all of those attractions and amenities is the MGM National Harbor Conference Center, whose 50,000 sf includes the 16,200-sf MGM Grand Ballroom

(featuring a 6,000-sf outdoor terrace with views of the Potomac River); the 4,284-sf Bellagio Ballroom; three 1,838-sf meeting rooms — Aria, Mandalay Bay and Beau Rivage; and two Mirage Boardrooms. And the latest meeting technology has been incorporated: The boardrooms, for example, feature built-in, 90-inch screens with video/teleconferencing capability, and every room has fiber optic ports.

Farther north in the well-trodden Atlantic City gaming market, MGM Resorts is also making meetings a priority

for its gaming properties with Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa's new 18,000-sf Central Conference Center. Scheduled to debut in May, the \$11 million facility features two stories of highly customizable event space including five meeting rooms, a boardroom and an office on the lower level, as well as a 6,500-sf clear span ballroom on the upper level. Like the MGM National Harbor Conference Center, the bilevel venue is equipped with the latest in technology, including high-definition digital projection, TV, and internet system capabilities paired

with all digital distributed sound systems. Touch panel controls can be used to customize décor lighting experiences. The Central Conference Center will complement the 2,000-room Borgata's existing meeting facilities: the 70,000-sf Event Center and 18,000-sf Water Club. Further on the horizon is MGM Springfield, expected to open in fall 2018. The approximately \$800 million gaming resort will include a 250-room hotel and is currently the largest construction project under development in Western Massachusetts.

## Making It Happen in Las Vegas

But while the company is expanding into promising new markets, its home base remains Las Vegas, as the names for the MGM National Harbor's meeting rooms suggest. Recently, MGM Resorts secured a major piece of corporate meetings business in Las Vegas, reaching a multiyear agreement with Microsoft. It will mark the first time Microsoft has combined four separate annual events, with as many as 30,000 participants, into one signature meeting. "With this contract, MGM Resorts



MGM National Harbor overlooking the Potomac River debuted in December with 50,000 sf of meeting and event space.



Atlantic City's Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa will debut the new two-story, 18,000-sf Central Conference Center in May.



is poised to deliver our third record-breaking meetings and conventions year in a row," said Michael Dominguez, senior vice president and chief sales officer for MGM Resorts, in a statement. While the details of Microsoft's property usage within the MGM brand have not been released, it is clear that the options are plenti-

ful, including massive hotels such as the 5,044-room MGM Grand (602,000 sf of meeting space), 4,004-room Aria Resort & Casino (300,000 sf) and 3,211-room Mandalay Bay Convention Resort (more than 2 million sf).

In the name of "due diligence," Peoria, Illinois-based Caterpillar Inc. has inspected several of Las Vegas' major resorts in trying to obtain the best value for its events surrounding CONEXPO and MINExpo. However, "Caesars always comes in not only with the best value for our dollar, but they're such a good partner that it's hard not to go with that option," notes Angela Baer, CMP, corporate meeting planner for Caterpillar Inc. The company uses Caesars Palace as its "base of operations."

"We have a huge block of meeting rooms and event space at Caesars Palace; we'll hold our VIP event and

**"Caesars always comes in not only with the best value for our dollar, but they're such a good partner that it's hard not to go with that option."**

**Angela Baer, CMP**  
Corporate Meeting Planner  
Caterpillar Inc.  
Peoria, IL

our dealer customer hospitality event there, along with a myriad of ad hoc meetings throughout the week for Caterpillar employees, dealers and customers. On peak we'll do about 3,500 room nights," Baer explains.

The property comfortably accommodates the group and all of its functions with 3,792 guest rooms and 300,000 sf of meeting space, including the Forum Ballroom where Caterpillar holds hospitality events for three nights, bringing in machinery to display and entertainment for dealers and customers. Baer notes that Caesars' "A-Z Guide" is a great resource for planners to source everything from entertainment to transportation vendors.

But more significantly, Caesars has been a longtime partner for Caterpillar because "whatever I need they make happen, whether I have it in the contract or not. We work as a team." As a case

in point, she cites a recent situation where Caterpillar gave away meeting space, contracted for the front end of its event, to another company that wanted the space. Subsequently, Caterpillar had a need for the space, and Caesars "worked with me and the company that wanted to use that space, and we were able to

get what we needed while not upsetting the other company," Baer relates. "And that's a real testament to Caesars to be able to do that. They were under no obligation to help me at all, but they wanted my experience to be the best."

Caesars also facilitates the process of booking restaurants, which is important for the variety of small gatherings of Caterpillar attendees that take place. "They have someone specifically dedicated to handling group reservations for any restaurant or venue inside any Caesars property," says Baer. "So you don't have to call these restaurants and figure it out."

Given the number of venues within each of Las Vegas' gaming properties, attendees have a wealth of options for impromptu onsite meetings outside the main program. The 1,506-room Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas, for instance, is home to 35 Steak + Martinis, Nobu, Goose Island Pub and other F&B outlets that can host a casual business gathering.

That variety is ideal for the 1,000-1,200 mobile app industry leaders coming in for Grow.co's Mobile Apps



The 1,506-room Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas offers 110,000 sf of contiguous function space.

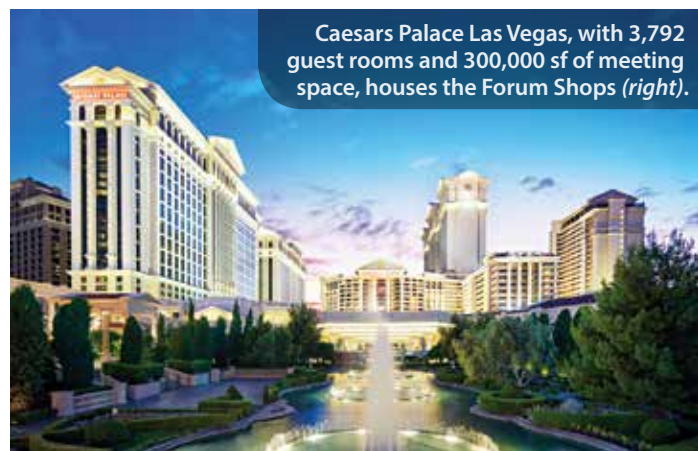
Credit: Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas



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Caesars Palace Las Vegas, with 3,792 guest rooms and 300,000 sf of meeting space, houses the Forum Shops (right).



Credits: Caesars Palace







Credit: Garbageman's Invitational/Ron McCracken

Consolidated Fabricators holds their annual invitational golf tournament and social event at Pechanga Resort & Casino in Temecula, California.

Unlocked conference at the property in May. "It's a very social group, and they do a lot of business in the restaurants and the bars," notes Michelle Troop, co-founder and COO/head of operations at New York, New York-based Grow.co. The event is returning to the Hard Rock after two years, in part because "the event worked really well there last time (2014)," she says. "We used their larger performance venue (the 4,000-capacity Joint) for the first-day general session, and it gives you the opportunity to have everybody together and feel like a really prominent event. And there is lots of breakout space for day two where we can do deep dives into their specific focuses." The hotel's recent meeting space expansion was another motivator for bringing the event back to the property. "We wanted to grow the event and (needed) added space," says Troop.



**Kerry A. Holmes**  
Vice President of Sales  
Consolidated Fabricators Corp.  
Van Nuys, CA

**"My guests are multimillionaires who belong to their own clubs, and I'm 100 percent comfortable that when they get (to Pechanga) they'll get that private club treatment."**

In December, the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas introduced its Artist Ballroom, which has added nearly 18,000 sf of meetings and convention space, along with new exterior signage along Paradise Road. The property now offers nearly 110,000 sf of contiguous function space, which can be broken down into eight separate and flexible configurations. The hotel also is known for its high-tech amenities, including Wi-Fi, CAT5 cabling and a program to create customizable AV packages.

#### Alternatives Out West

Groups who would more conveniently meet at a gaming resort out West need not

be limited to Las Vegas. There are intriguing, lesser known gaming destinations in locations such as Scottsdale/Fountain Hills, Arizona, and Temecula, California. The former is home to We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center, and the latter is home to the expanding Pechanga Resort & Casino. The resorts are operated by Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and the Pechanga band of Luiseño Indians, respectively.

The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation also operates Fort McDowell Casino, We-Ko-Pa Golf Club and Fort McDowell Adventures, affording groups who stay at We-Ko-Pa Resort several options in offsite activities.

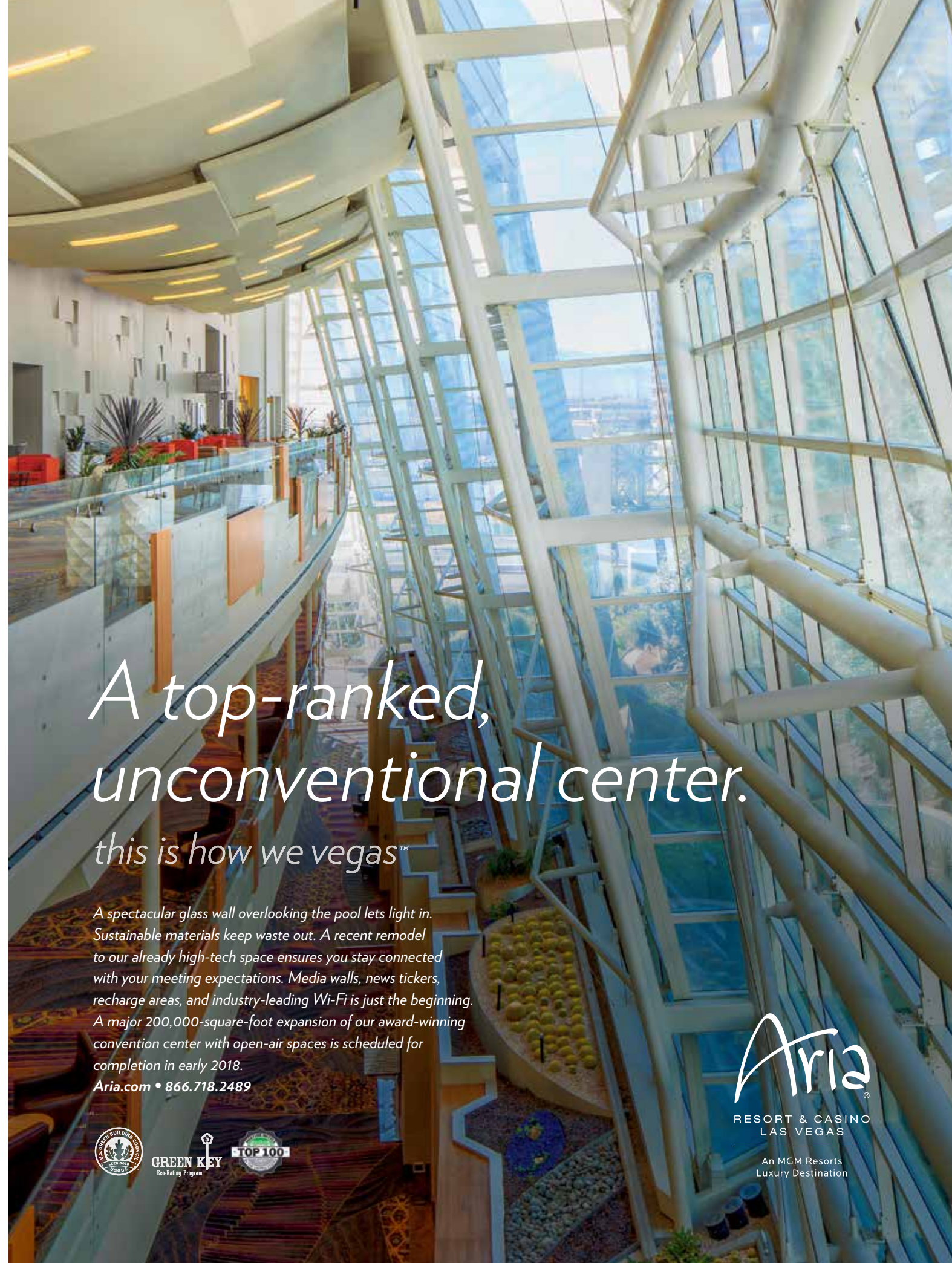
The 246-room resort itself has several virtues that have made it a great site for Bridgeport, New Jersey-based Dewatering Solutions' events over the past few years. This January, the company held its Western and Central regional sales meeting at the property, following two years of hosting a distributor partner meeting there. "It ticks off a lot of boxes for us," says Laura A. Gibson, strategic events specialist for the company. "The resort is close to the airport (20 minutes from Phoenix International), has excellent, flexible meeting space, and the service from everyone you encounter is like being in a five-star property. They are phenomenal to deal with."

For example, she relates that the staff once worked a minor miracle in getting a piece of industrial equipment into one of the ballrooms that comprise the 25,000-sf Wassaja Conference Center. "We also did a themed pub night (with food stations and pub games) in one of the ballrooms, and they suggested, 'Why don't you just use the room behind it, too, and we can open it up?' They're always one step ahead," Gibson adds. Apart from golf, casino visits, dune buggy rides and horseback riding, attendees of past events have enjoyed an outing to a nearby shooting range in Mesa, fully coordinated by her contact at the We-Ko-Pa Resort.



Credit: We-Ko-Pa Resort

The Wassaja Conference Center at We-Ko-Pa Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, offers 25,000 sf of meeting space.



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Credit: The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino

The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino's new 1,170-sf pop-up coworking lounge offers spaces for attendees to informally gather, as well as a conference room for small meetings.

Van Nuys, California-based Consolidated Fabricators Corp. (ConFab), a manufacturer of steel fabricated containers, has a similarly strong partnership with Pechanga Resort & Casino in Temecula, California, where the company's Garbagegan's Invitational Golf Tournament & Social Event has been held for seven years; the eighth installment will be in June. The charity event brings in about 300–350 attendees, a group of sponsors, owners and executives of vendors to the sanitation business.

"We have two days of golf, and then we have a cocktail party and golf awards dinner," says Kerry A. Holmes, vice president of sales for ConFab, who founded the event. Guests challenge themselves on the 18-hole Journey golf course, explore the largest casino floor in California (200,000 sf), and enjoy fine dining in the rooftop Eagle's Nest ballroom, where the awards ceremony is held. "Quite honestly, 80 percent of my guests are multimillionaires who belong to their own clubs, and I'm 100 percent comfortable that when they get (to Pechanga), they'll get that private club treatment," notes Holmes.

The resort's expansion certainly will benefit the Invitational, he adds. "Our

event has grown every year, and many (attendees) bring their spouses. So this expansion is really going to enhance our event because it's going to be more of a destination. We're going to have a property that will rival any top resort in terms of pools, restaurants, etc."

The \$285 million project, set to be completed by year's end, will add 568 guest rooms; expand indoor and outdoor function space by 70,000 sf; and add a luxury spa, pool complex and two new restaurants to the existing 11.

#### New & Noteworthy

**The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino** this year began offering business guests access to a unique "coworking space" in the heart of The Venetian/The Palazzo Congress Center. The 1,170-sf pop-up lounge offers spaces for attendees to recharge and informally gather, as well as a conference room for small meetings. "Our coworking pop-up taps into a growing trend of creating collabora-

tive workspaces that can be used on a temporary basis in addition to traditional offices," said Lisa Marchese, chief marketing officer at The Venetian and The Palazzo, in a statement. "Placing a coworking space in the heart of a meetings and convention destination combines two concepts that you do not often see together." Indeed, it is refreshing to see a hotel the size of the 4,027-room Venetian cater to groups' small-scale business needs.

It's not all business at the property, of course. As a gaming resort and destination unto itself, The Venetian is home to restaurants by celebrity chefs such as Mario Batali, Emeril Lagasse and Thomas Keller; residencies by legendary musicians such as Diana Ross and Steely Dan; and the renowned Tao Nightclub.

In December, the hotel introduced The Dorsey, billed as "the ultimate destination for cocktail enthusiasts." The 4,500-sf space is accented with rich materials such as French oak, brass, leather and marble, supplemented by a separate library space. Opulence brings to mind

**Wynn Resorts**, featuring the 2,716-room Wynn Las Vegas and 2,034-room Encore. The two hotels' combined 260,000 sf of meeting space is complemented by a vast selection of upscale amenities, from award-winning restaurants such as SW Steakhouse and Sinatra, to the Wynn and Encore Esplanades, the Spa and the Wynn Golf Club (designed by Tom Fazio and Steve Wynn). Groups who enjoy the Wynn brand can look forward to the proposed Wynn Paradise Park — which would replace the golf course with a 1,000-room hotel tower and 260,000 sf of meeting space

Wynn and Encore share 260,000 sf of meeting and event spaces. (Right) Encore's European pool.



Credit: Wynn Resorts

**We-Ko-Pa**  
"has excellent, flexible meeting space, and the service...is like being in a five-star property. They are phenomenal to deal with."

**Laura A. Gibson**  
Strategic Events Specialist  
Dewatering Solutions  
Bridgeport, NJ

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Credits: Tropicana Las Vegas

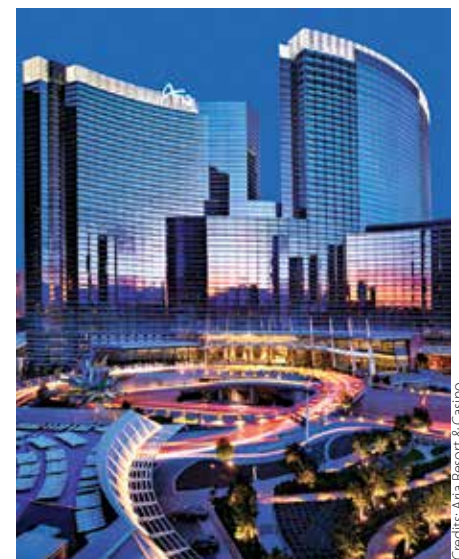


Tropicana Las Vegas - a DoubleTree by Hilton features a 100,000-sf conference center and Tropicana Theater.

with waterfront views — and Wynn Plaza, a retail hub debuting this fall by Las Vegas Boulevard.

Wynn is adding the Amazon Echo, a hands-free voice-controlled speaker, in all guest rooms by this summer. The device initially will control guest room lights, room temperature, drapery and the television. As the project evolves, future features such as personal assistant functions will be introduced.

This year also will see a new venue debut at **Tropicana Las Vegas – a DoubleTree by Hilton**: Celebrity Chef Robert Irvine's first signature restaurant on the Las Vegas Strip. The host of Food Network's "Restaurant: Impossible" is creating a modern American-inspired restaurant on the hotel's casino floor. The 50,000-sf casino is just the beginning of what the 1,470-room resort has to offer. Other highlights include a 100,000-sf conference center with up to 38 breakout rooms; the 1,200-seat Tropicana Theater; the top-rated Laugh Factory Las Vegas; and Glow, a Mandara Spa.



Credits: Aria Resort & Casino

**Aria Resort & Casino** is in the midst of a major expansion of its award-winning LEED Gold-certified convention center. The \$154 million project will deliver an additional 200,000 sf of technologically advanced, flexible meeting space across four stories, highlighted by stunning indoor/open-air spaces and a glass-enclosed venue with views of The Park and new T-Mobile Arena. With the completion of the expansion, Aria will feature more than 500,000 sf of meeting space. Construction began in May 2016 with anticipated completion in February 2018. The Jewel Nightclub, a 24,000-sf nightlife destination, opened at Aria last May.

In February, a new Mandara Spa was introduced in a very different gaming market, Uncasville, Connecticut. The Earth Tower at **Mohegan Sun** is now home to the global spa brand's 51st location, and the Sky Tower spa is scheduled to be renovated and rebranded as a Mandara Spa this year. Groups



Aria Resort & Casino is currently expanding its convention center (rendering above) by 200,000 sf.

looking for a Northeastern gaming destination removed from the competition of Atlantic City have long opted for Mohegan Sun, which offers 1,563 guest rooms and suites, and more than 100,000 sf of flexible meeting space, in-



Credits: Mohegan Sun

The new Earth Tower at Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Connecticut, is now home to a Mandara Spa.

cluding the 38,000-sf, pillar-free Uncas Ballroom. CMM- and CMP-certified Event Service Managers are on hand to assist planners with the multitude of event design possibilities here. Yet the property also is well prepared to entertain attendees on its own, with ongoing shows at Mohegan Sun Arena, the Wolf's Den, COMIX Comedy and several F&B festivals.

Developments like Pechanga's expansion, MGM National Harbor and MGM Springfield show that the concept of the destination gaming resort is being implemented in many smaller markets outside Las Vegas and Atlantic City. The trend is welcomed by planners who prefer gaming as just one free-time option among many, thus catering to a diversity of tastes. **C&IT**

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the Havana Room™ and Tropicana Theater, outdoor events surrounded by our lush pool gardens and a convenient location on the Strip just minutes from the airport, major convention centers and top entertainment stadiums, come see why so many meeting planners are rediscovering and choosing Tropicana Las Vegas – a DoubleTree by Hilton!



## Risk Management

# Cybersecurity Takes Center Stage

## Information Security Is More Important Than Ever

By Mark Rowh

Security has always been a concern in planning meetings. But in an increasingly complex world, few would argue that the need to keep information secure is taking on new levels of importance, especially when it comes to online interactions.

"Today, more than ever, planners are taking notice of security and risk management as it pertains to the planning of their own events," says Matthew Marcial, vice president, education and events for

Meeting Professionals International. He notes that while physical threats may garner the most attention, the occurrence of issues relating to cybersecurity are much more common.

The truth is, online crooks may be after much more than accessing your home computer or convincing you that a Nigerian prince needs to deposit big bucks into your bank account. For some, the meeting environment offers rich hunting grounds.

"Although it may seem like travel booking services, event planning services and conference organizing would not be a ripe target for cyberattacks, it would be incorrect to assume that these verticals are not targeted, oftentimes with success," says Alex Heid, chief research officer at Securi-

tyScorecard, a New York-based security rating and risk monitoring firm. Known as an experienced white hat hacker (one who hacks for the common good), Heid

also has direct experience in planning meetings as an organizer with the Hack-Miami Conference that takes place every year in Miami Beach. He notes that hackers often target information that is not protected by advanced controls. This may include email address/password combinations, credit card data and other personally identifiable information that can be leveraged for underground criminal activities. Especially vulnerable is information basic to registration and payment processes.

### Exercise Caution

Marcial says a high level of importance should be placed on ensuring that sensitive information such as credit card numbers and other personal information is securely stored, noting that many organizations no longer allow printing or e-mailing of this type of information. Too, planners as well as attendees and other stakeholders should exercise caution when using unsecured wireless networks, as this presents a greater risk for hacking and data theft. Advance work



Credit: Ann Windham James

regarding compliance and emergency planning also should be undertaken.

"Planners should do their best to ensure that their organizations and suppliers are compliant with all local and federal regulations relating to their data management processes," Marcial says. "At the planner level, this may mean only working with technology partners such as a registration provider whose systems are fully compliant with the latest security and data protection." Every organization also should have a comprehensive crisis management plan in place in the event that reactive steps need to be taken, he adds.

"Cybersecurity is a critical issue that impacts this industry in many ways," says Michael Lynn, co-founder of Dallas-based Global PEC and Professional Trade-show Resources. "It's especially critical in meeting and conference registration because name and credit card information can be hacked. The liability is costly and can have severe ramifications. Also, the hackers then can...cause overall havoc."

Lynn recalls a meeting where an attendee inserted a flash drive with pre-

and chief information officer at Digital Defense Inc., a San Antonio computer security service provider. "More often than not, wireless networks are set up as open networks with little to no security so that it is easy for attendees to connect to and use the network."

Meeting planners should go the next step, he suggests, by ensuring that the wireless network is set up with WPA2 security, and that the shared passphrase is provided only to the attendees and not to members of the hotel staff or other parties.

If a reliable and secure network is not provided, meeting attendees are likely to enable their own services such as mobile phone hotspots or other mobile wireless nodes. But this can cause problems, according to Ron Winward, security evangelist at Radware, a provider of cyber security solutions with North American headquarters in Mahwah, New Jersey. "When this happens, the wireless spectrums interfere with each other and ev-

**"Remember that unencrypted Wi-Fi and even WEP can be easily decoded by hackers onsite hoping to capture user data."**



**Ron Winward**  
Security Evangelist  
Radware  
Mahwah, NJ

loaded software into her computer, not realizing she had been set up for someone to access her personal and her company's data and infect the overall system with a virus.

"I got a call and it turned out five computers had been affected so we had to destroy all five computers, including hers," Lynn explains.

"Wireless security is typically the thing that meeting planners need to worry about the most," says Tom DeSot, E.V.P.



**"Wireless security is typically the thing that meeting planners need to worry about the most."**

**Tom DeSot**  
E.V.P. and CIO  
Digital Defense Inc.  
San Antonio, TX

curity officer for OneLogin, an identity and access management solutions provider based in San Francisco, says planners also should keep in mind that event spaces are used by many different entities before and after a given event and thus should be considered unsecured, similar to working with public Wi-Fi in a coffee shop.

"You have no guarantees that the same level of security measures your IT team put into your corporate network are available in these spaces," he says. "Attackers focused on one company will find the path of least resistance, and attacking an event space, rather than the company network, is bound to be an easier target."

In many cases, a major point of weakness is an unsecured network, according to Hoyos. He points out that most event spaces offer hardwired or Wi-Fi networks as a service, whether it's for attendees to be able to get an internet connection, for presenters to be able to show their slide deck from their laptop, or for other media purposes.

"Knowing that these networks will be used by other entities, sometimes because the event space publishes this information, is a great opportunity to try to intercept corporate data or compromise a corporate device," he says.

Heid notes that while online event planning tools may offer positives and that some providers attempt to provide security solutions, using them also centralizes information within an easily accessible interface. That means if the organizer's credentials or the service

everyone has a bad experience," he says. To avoid this situation, he advises making sure to have a well-planned wireless network that supports both an encrypted protocol like WPA2 (and perhaps adding 802.1x), as well as an unencrypted service.

"When I attend conferences, my greatest info security concern is that my personal data is secure and that I have access to secure Wi-Fi, which also encompasses having working internet access," Winward says. He notes that many events even publish their network topology for users to see, where they can ensure nothing unusual is happening to their data.

"Protect your customer registration data and provide them with secure networking during their event," he says. "Remember that unencrypted Wi-Fi and even WEP can be easily decoded by hackers onsite hoping to capture user data."

Alvaro Hoyos, chief information se-

**"Today, more than ever, planners are taking notice of security and risk management as it pertains to the planning of their own events."**



**Matthew Marcial**, CAE, CMP  
Vice President, Education and Events  
Meeting Professionals International  
Dallas, TX



## Security From the Planner's Point of View

"As a long-time event planner, I've always considered physical event security one of the many critical event components I manage, with needs assessment, appropriate resource procurement and oversight," says Caroline Kay, founder of C.Kay International, a Seattle-based event management firm. "But in today's cyber-focused world, secur-



**Caroline Kay**, Founder  
C.Kay International, Seattle, WA

**"Ultimately, the goal of IT security at an event is to reduce the client's risk of compromising their competitive advantage."**

mise is the process by which the info is being presented; and whether the physical environment adds to or mitigates the risk.

When Kay starts planning an event with a client, she determines if the client has done a sufficient information security threat/vulnerability assessment for the event. If so, then her team moves forward to under-

stand and support their IT security needs, just as with requirements such as catering, venue selection and transportation.

"If the client hasn't done an assessment, then I work with them to determine if their IT department can handle it or if external consultants should be brought in," she says. "I've developed strong relationships with IT security professionals who can advise me and who I can recommend to clients — just as I do with physical security teams."

— MR

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"If the client hasn't done an assessment, then I work with them to determine if their IT department can handle it or if external consultants should be brought in," she says. "I've developed strong relationships with IT security professionals who can advise me and who I can recommend to clients — just as I do with physical security teams."

itself becomes compromised, registration and payment information can still be obtained by interlopers.

On the other hand if an event organizer chooses to self-host registration solutions, then Heid advises leveraging a less-is-more approach to the technologies employed. This might include using static HTML websites as well as payment services for credit card payments that allow credit card processing

without the need for meeting organizers to handle credit card data.

Too, if a planner chooses to make use of a third-party event service, the use of a continuous third-party vendor monitoring solution also is recommended by Heid.

"This solution allows users to keep an eye on the external security posture of any third-party company entity being utilized," he says. You can respond to security issues before they have a negative impact."

### Awareness Is Key

"The importance of planning for cybersecurity is a risk management decision that should be based on the circumstances of the

event," says Christopher Wright, principal of Citadel Systems, an Arkansas-based cybersecurity consulting firm. "If the topics and information are more sensitive,

the planner will need to make stronger plans to protect the information and the attendees." In planning sensitive events for larger companies, he adds, the planner should consider meeting with a corporate threat intelligence or risk management group in the planning process.

Awareness is the key, according to Wright, who suggests that meeting organizers take steps to emphasize security needs to attendees.

"Notify them that Wi-Fi is provided as part of the venue, but that users should take additional steps to ensure their information is protected," he says. "First and foremost, ensure that attendees know the proper hotspot to use. Nefarious people can set up hotspots that advertise free Wi-Fi and may seem legitimate, but then falsify connections to steal sensitive information or passwords."

Wright adds that for corporate events, organizers also should emphasize the use of company VPN (virtual private network) software. This practice adds an-

**Continued on page 51**

**"Nefarious people can set up hotspots that advertise free Wi-Fi and may seem legitimate, but then falsify connections to steal sensitive information or passwords."**



**Christopher Wright**  
Principal  
Citadel Systems  
Sherwood, AR

### Continued from page 26

other layer of security and reduces risk of data theft. For events requiring a higher than normal level of security, planners might want to work with corporate technical staff to provide dedicated and private connectivity for attendees. Beyond awareness, though, the decision is a risk versus cost one.

Hoyos notes that unsecured equipment also can bring challenges.

"Onsite equipment that will be used for media purposes can also be a big risk factor," he says. "If a device is already compromised or not properly secured and you are saving files to it or logging into your accounts, you are introducing risks into your otherwise secured application or leaking internal information."

Personal data also can be problematic. "Guests signing in on tablets, pictures being taken and invites being sent out to personal email addresses are some ways personal data is picked up as part of an event," Hoyos says.

He notes that understanding what data will be captured and what will reside with you versus the venue is important. "If any data will sit on the venue's systems, even temporarily, you should have a process planned out to make sure you get verification that the data has been released to you or completely wiped from their systems," he says. And since it's your event, you will be liable for any personal data.

### Beware of a False Sense of Security

Robert Siciliano, CSP, CEO of IDTheft-

include information regarding cybersecurity threats as well.

"It's equally important that planners provide information in meeting brochures and handouts, or on the website, in regard to the attendees' responsibility for their own information security," he adds.

He notes that when a group leaves a meeting room for lunch, it's inevitable that attendees leave laptops and tablets behind. Yet these devices can not only be easily stolen, but also infected with malware.

Too often, both planners and attendees live under the false sense of security that "these things won't happen here," Siciliano says. But even when equipment is secured in physical terms, it may still be vulnerable.

"Planners and event attendees are at high risk when everyone has access to main frame, full data and wireless connection through the internet," says Ann Windham James, owner of Texas-based trade show and event management firm Imagine Xhibits & Events. James also is the founder of TS Tech Summit, which will be held this year at host hotel Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. James and Michael Lynn are scheduled to give talks on cybersecurity and similar topics at the show set for April 20-23.

As far as best practices go, James says a registration computer should be preloaded with all related information processed on that computer, and it should not be linked to other computers. Similarly, planning staff should avoid using flash drives for transferring information to eliminate virus contamination from one computer to the next.

Security.com, says a key to avoiding problems is conferring with hotel security teams to determine what systems they have or don't have in place. If they have some type of crisis management response plan it may

Often at conferences, lists are downloaded and shared across computers which can cause all computers to be infected.

Heid points to web application security for registration and payment processing as a major area to consider in achieving top security, along with secure storage and handling of registration lists and payment data.

"For web applications, ensure that all patches and updates are in place and configurations are hardened," he says. "The use of a web application firewall service also goes a long way."

He also advises employing third-party vendor risk-monitoring services to examine the external security postures of service providers offering business solutions such as registration, payment and mailing list service.

"Encourage attendees to use VPN services if they are going to use conference-provided Wi-Fi," Heid adds. "Often the Wi-Fi is provided by the venue, and no special security controls are in place."

In looking out for the interests of meeting attendees, planners should be especially aware of possible secu-



**"Fraudsters will work harder to compromise a high-end hotel... affluent customers' payment cards fetch a higher price on the black market."**

**Seth Ruden**  
Senior Fraud Consultant  
ACI Worldwide  
Waltham, MA

rity breaches at high-end hotels, according to Seth Ruden, senior fraud consultant for ACI Worldwide in Waltham, Massachusetts.

"Fraudsters will work harder to compromise a high-end hotel as the target, with the logic that more affluent customers' payment cards fetch a higher price on the black market," he says. "That does not mean economy brands have not been affected; they certainly have,

**"Attackers focused on one company will find the path of least resistance, and attacking an event space, rather than the company network, is... an easier target."**



**Alvaro Hoyos**  
Chief Information Security Officer  
OneLogin  
San Francisco, CA



**“What separates the winners from the losers is rapid response and mitigation of potential future incidents.”**



**Alex Heid**  
Chief Research Officer  
SecurityScorecard  
New York, NY

that looks to be something routine, so they accept. Then the moment the connection is made, every bit of information on a computer, from passwords to confidential business information, is vulnerable to cyberattack. Yet this could have been avoided with a virtual private network.

“That’s why a VPN connection is critical when connecting to the internet while on the go or while attending a meeting or trying to conduct business from a hotel,” he says. “VPNs offer total privacy to roam the internet freely without being tracked, monitored or having data collected and stored. VPN networks are designed to encrypt information before it goes through a network, thwarting potential attacks.”

Baker adds that encrypting data also can prevent information from being stolen or held ransom. “Encrypting email is actually a secondary protection against corporate information being stolen or held ransom at an offsite meeting,” he says. Most companies have exterior protection such as a firewall, but very few take steps to protect data at rest inside of their infrastructure. Database files, documents and emails can be encrypted on disk so that if a device is stolen or compromised, the data that resides on it is still protected, Baker says.

### Handling a Breach

Of course, even with the most diligent efforts, problems with cybersecurity may occur. What happens if a security breach occurs?

“If it’s discovered that there has been an information security incident surrounding an event, such as the compromise of registration data or payment data, then a rapid notification to the affected parties is the most important action item,” Heid says. He stresses that attendees should be informed that their email address, password and/or payment information has been recently

compromised. They then can take proactive steps to monitor for suspicious login activity, incoming spam messages, unauthorized credit card activity and similar indicators of compromise.

“Eventually, everyone becomes the victim of an information security breach, especially with the trends indicating a growing reliance on third-party services. What separates the winners from the losers is rapid response and mitigation of potential future incidents,” Heid says.

In the event problems arise, planners should first work through any protocol that their organization has in place, Marcial advises. “The situation should also be reported to local law enforcement.” Another strategy: Have a communications plan executed so that all stakeholders, including those who are affected by the situation are kept up-to-date.

In planning to avoid such problems, James says it’s important to stress infor-



**“Have a security expert on your advisory board, on retainer or on your team to protect from security threats and/or prevent breach issues.”**

### Ann Windham James

Owner, Imagine Xhibits & Events Inc.  
McKinney, TX

mation security as a major part of the event planning process.

“Have a security expert on your advisory board, on retainer or on your team to protect from security threats and/or prevent breach issues.” She also advises having a plan in place with a checklist that includes steps to ensure against cybersecurity threats. Such details should also be included in requests for proposals to chosen venues so respondents can include steps they’ve put in place to prevent hacks and security breaches. In addition, she notes that meeting planners should keep their education and certifications up to date in the area of information security.

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Table settings in the Marine Mammal Hall for the Site Classic event hosted by the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE MEETINGS

### A Joint Effort Between Planners and Suppliers Reaches a Deeper Shade of Green

By Parick Simms

Running environmentally responsible meetings is an ongoing challenge for planners who take that responsibility seriously. It seems there are always ways to reach a “deeper shade of green,” whether that means adding new eco-friendly practices at a particular meeting or expanding the practices to more of one’s events. The effort is always easier when a planner can partner with suppliers who also take sustainability seriously, or even better, a city or region known for its green practices.

A stellar example in this regard is Monterey County, California, where

the first-ever Sustainable Hospitality Symposium was held on February 23. Local public officials, public policy experts, hospitality and tourism professionals, hospitality developers and contractors, and hospitality educators all gathered at the InterContinental The Clement Monterey with the goal of shaping “the future of the Monterey Bay region as the leading sustainable hospitality, eco-tourism and eco-recreation region in the country,” according to Shyam Kamath, dean of the College of Business at California State University, Monterey Bay.

While Monterey County may not

yet be the official leader in sustainable hospitality, it is certainly among the leaders, and as such has been an ideal partner for San Jose, California-based Maxim Integrated. The integrated circuits manufacturer is among Silicon Valley’s greenest companies. To give one example, its LEED Gold-certified headquarters campus obtains approximately 80–90 percent of its electricity from an onsite Bloom Energy System, whose low-carbon units convert clean natural gas into electricity with no emissions other than water, explains Tim Warren, corporate director of environmental health and safety.



“And their (Monterey Bay Aquarium) chef’s food program is **sustainable, organic** and **sourced locally**.”

**Pilar Gutierrez**

Senior Manager, Corporate Events and Trade Shows, Maxim Integrated, San Jose, CA

Pilar Gutierrez, the company’s senior manager, corporate events and trade shows, does her part to ensure the green initiative extends to events. In Monterey County, she has worked with several facilities that support her efforts, including the Monterey Marriott, The Portola Hotel & Spa, Folktales Winery & Vineyards, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Gutierrez describes some of the green virtues of these venues, beginning with the Monterey Marriott: “One-fourth of Monterey Marriott’s energy comes from clean windmill power. They recycle office paper, plastic and glass, and use only post-consumer paper. Their property is Energy Star-certified, and they have water-saving showerheads in all guest rooms,” she says. “They provide reusable, thermal lunch boxes. Their light switches in offices and storage rooms have motion sensors and timed light switches.”

The Folktales Winery, she notes, “supports local businesses,” is organically farmed and “uses natural cleaning products throughout their facilities.” Both are important to her, as she tries to keep her

“groups and attendees healthy and away from as many chemicals as possible.”

As for the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Gutierrez points out that it “diverts approximately 90+ percent of their waste to be recycled and/or composted. They source their food within 30 miles of the aquarium to reduce their carbon footprint. And their chef’s food program is sustainable, organic and sourced locally.”

#### Green Meetings Are Found Everywhere

Indeed, keeping meetings green is greatly facilitated with the right supplier partners, such as the venues in Monterey. But sustainability-minded properties are not just found in cities and regions with a reputation for that value.

In Las Vegas, a city known primarily for lavish entertainment, MGM Resorts International is strongly committed to environmental responsibility with its Green Advantage program. The comprehensive sustainability platform integrates environmentally responsible practices that effectively lower the carbon footprint of the company’s hotel

operations and hosted events. Green Advantage focuses on energy and water conservation, green building (City-Center venues have received multiple Gold LEED Awards), maintaining sustainable supply chains, and recycling and water conservation.

“They do all recycling back of house,” observes Karen Zunkowski, director of global event marketing for ivanti, a South Jordan, Utah-based IT solutions company. “Many of the hotels that we’ve been using over the last 10 years have been MGM properties, where they have a pretty high standard” for sustainability.

Zunkowski plans the company’s Interchange conference, convening about 1,000 participants, as well as an annual sales kickoff for about 650 attendees. Like many planners, she considers a hotel’s level of “greenness” important, though not necessarily a deciding factor in site sourcing. “It’s definitely one of the considerations that’s part of our checklist as we’re doing venue searches,” she says. “I usually ask about their sustainability practices,

“We **donate** any leftover **materials** to **local** facilities, especially in Las Vegas where we host our Interchange user conference.”



**Karen Zunkowski**

Director of Global Event Marketing, ivanti, South Jordan, UT





The Portola Hotel & Spa in Monterey, California.

Credit: ©2013 Jacob Peir

but some have it somewhat buried in their website or conference materials. Others are very proud of their status and what they're doing, and so they're a little more obvious."

### Showcasing Sustainable Practices

In October, the Green Meeting Industry Council (an initiative of the Convention Industry Council) presented the results of a new research project, "Sustainable Meeting and Event Practices: The State of the Industry," at IMEX America. Among the survey results, meeting professionals indicated their preference that their suppliers communicate sustainable practices at the RFP stage without being asked about them.

"One of the interesting things about the research was that there is a difference between planners and suppliers when it comes to communication on sustainable practices," notes Mariela McIlwraith, CMP, CMM, MBA, director, sustainability, for the GMIC. "Planners want the information provided up front, while suppliers are waiting to be asked for the information. It's a great opportunity for suppliers to deliver more than what is expected in a proposal by showcasing sustainable practices before being asked for them."

Many suppliers will have no shortage of practices to describe to potential clients. According to the study, suppliers engage in more sustainable practices than their customers.

As far as which practices are most important to planners, the study listed the top 10 most requested as:

- Sorting recyclables.
- Donating leftover food to charitable organizations.
- Diverting food waste from waste stream.
- Linen and towel reuse programs.
- Using water glasses and filling stations (in lieu of bottled water).
- Offering vegetarian menu and allergy-friendly menus.
- Sourcing local food
- Using event apps (to reduce paper usage).
- Requesting energy-efficient lighting.
- Planning give-back programs for the local community.

Gutierrez cites several other practices that are important to her: "I like having the option to forgo daily room

cleanings to save on wasting so much water on laundry, especially if the hotel uses chlorinated bleach, which is toxic for human health and the environment," she says. "I also appreciate hotels that offer points instead of having your room cleaned." Gutierrez, who uses Energy Star properties when possible, also prefers hotels that use solar power and those with programs for saving water (e.g., in the showers and toilets).

All of these qualities and practices are familiar to most experienced planners, and a variety of certifications and standards serve to indicate when a facility is performing well in these areas and others, when it is constructed in a sustainable manner, and when, and to what degree, a hosted event is environmentally responsible.

### Education to Erase Confusion

The variety has apparently created some "confusion" among GMIC survey participants, who expressed that in their responses. McIlwraith feels education is needed to help relieve the confusion. "And we need to make the education about the standards easy to access and understand," she says. Nancy Zavada, CMP, president and founder of MeetGreen, concurs, adding that "I don't think there are too many certifications because they all basically (assess) something different. For example, LEED really helps because you know how the building was built, while Green Globe and Green Seal are for venue and hotel operations: what cleaning products



Events at the Ferrantes Bay View Lounge at the Monterey Marriott feature spectacular views of Monterey Bay.

Credit: Marriott International

## GMIC Update: Tools Coming to Improve Green Events

About a year ago, the Green Meeting Industry Council became an initiative of the Convention Industry Council. Mariela McIlwraith, CMP, CMM, MBA, director, sustainability for the GMIC, notes that the most important change that has resulted from this development "has been the ability to amplify the message about sustainable practices, and the benefits they provide to meetings and the business of meetings, through CIC's member organizations and through the strong community of CMPs."

### Sustainable Meetings

One vehicle for amplifying that message has been GMIC's Sustainable Meetings Conference, held September 15–16

in Baltimore, Maryland. "One of the significant developments at the 2016 SMC was a broadened view of sustainable events; we included a variety of sessions for both environmental and social responsibility, as well as the introduction of new GMIC-commissioned research on the business of sustainable events," McIlwraith says. "The conference included education on people, planet and profit. In addition to the long-standing tradition of peer-to-peer learning at SMC, we were also fortunate to have a great opening keynote by Leslie Lukacs from SCS Engineers, who brought us up to speed on the transition from traditional waste management approaches, to

a more intentional strategy for sustainable materials management with a greater focus on the circular economy."

### Sea-to-Table Approach

Sustainable F&B was not left off the menu of topics. "Following a lunch prepared by the Hilton Baltimore featuring local rockfish from the Seafood Watch best-choice list and accompaniments that focused on reducing food waste, we learned about the Sea-to-Table approach at the Monterey Bay Aquarium from their very own executive chef, Matthew Beaudin," she adds. "The end of the GMIC Sustainable Meetings Conference also marked the beginning of the CMP Conclave. As we welcomed

CMPs to join us for our closing keynote, National Geographic photographer Annie Griffiths shared her photos and stories from around the world of the importance of sustainability and programs that empower women in the developing world as they deal with the effects of climate change."

### How-to Guides and More

As for GMIC initiatives upcoming this year, McIlwraith advises CIC members and other planners to "keep an eye out for more how-to-guides, webinars and research papers! We're focused on developing tools to make it easier for event professionals to improve their events through sustainable practices." —PS

they're using, what kind of light bulbs. They might have built a recycling center, but are they using it? ISO 20121 is an event standard that deals mostly with systems management, while the APEX/ASTM (environmentally sustainable meetings) standards are more of a checklist."

While the APEX standards are theoretically quite useful, Zavada observes that "they haven't gotten really popular. They're pretty rigorous, and planners are still looking for top 10 or top 15 (green practices), something less rigorous."

Anecdotally, neither has she seen much traction among planners for MPI's Sustainable Meeting Professional Certificate (SMPC), obtained after a three-hour course, the successful completion of which "will indicate that the holder is capable of planning an event compliant with ISO 20121 and APEX/ASTM standards and is able to meet the criteria for GRI reporting," according to MPI.

While Zavada does not discourage planners from obtaining an SMPC or becoming versed in these standards,

she does offer a more practicable route. "Planners can adopt their own sustainable events policy so they know what they're going to ask for every single time, and they can use any one of those frameworks to start with," she suggests. "They can pick the top 10 things and then next year add another, and so on."

McIlwraith adds that planners already have the skillset to green their meetings, an initiative grounded in logistical thinking. "Fortunately, at its core, sustainability in the meetings industry is about making better choices and being more efficient," she says. "The skills we use on a daily basis to produce events are the same ones we need to make them more sustainable. It's just changing our focus a bit to consider the next steps, such as what happens to materials and waste after our events, and how we can intentionally design logistics to improve our environmental and social impact."

### Donations

One simple practice that can be add-

ed to most meetings is the charitable donation of reusable materials from the event. "We donate any leftover materials to local facilities, especially in Las Vegas where we host our Interchange user conference," Zunkowski relates. "We work with an organization called The Teacher Exchange that (accepts) our signs, banners, leftover pens, folders, pads etc. They gather those things into a warehouse where local teachers can come and shop for materials for their classrooms."

Food donation should be part of the event as well, and that can be coordinated through the host venue. "I think that's a great one to institute," says Zavada. "Make sure that the venue is donating food to a local food bank. I know there is misinformation regarding liability and health codes, but the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act holds you not liable for (the unwholesome condition of) any kinds of food donations made through a food bank," except in cases of gross negligence. And if a venue is not already working





“(When the distance...is manageable) use a pedometer for a **walking challenge** instead of having **shuttles**.”

**Nancy Zavada, CMP**

President and Founder, MeetGreen, Portland, OR

with a food bank and begins doing so at the planner's request, “you're leaving a legacy behind in setting up those relationships,” she says.

In addition, McIlwraith suggests asking event technology providers to donate or recycle their batteries. It's yet another simple green practice that is often overlooked.

#### Locally Sourced F&B

Here is a case where a culinary trend and a sustainability trend dovetail. Attendees increasingly want meals pre-

vention center and hotel chefs are focused on showcasing them. McIlwraith suggests that planners “be flexible and allow the chef to make decisions that meet your budget and sustainability goals.” Organic foods, for example, may entail costs that do not align with the F&B budget.

Gutierrez notes that some of her green initiatives have actually resulted in cost savings by an overall 15 percent in the last few years. These include ordering less food to minimize waste; ordering food in smaller amounts and “a la cart” items instead of huge buffets; offering attendees to-go boxes for lunch if they need it; ordering food that can carry over for a couple days; and opting for whole fruit, which can easily be eaten a day or two later, instead of an elaborate break with perishable baked goods.

#### Transportation

Clearly, using public transportation is greener than shuttles and rental cars, and planners

can always encourage the use of the greener option when it is reasonably convenient for attendees. For ivanti's sales kickoff in Salt Lake City, Zunkowski did just that regarding attendees' short commute from the airport. “There is a light rail system that goes directly from the airport to downtown,” she notes. “Because it's our sales kickoff and it's an internal meeting, (the greener trans-

portation mode) is a little easier to ‘enforce’: We're not going to reimburse you for a rental car so find another way to get to the event.”

Walking, the greenest transportation mode of all, nicely coincides with the wellness trend. When the distance to an offsite venue is manageable for all attendees on foot and time allows, “use a pedometer for a walking challenge instead of having shuttles,” Zavada suggests.

#### Measurement and Reporting

Tracking one's progress on the green front is essential for both improving processes and reporting them to one's stakeholders. Zavada, whose company assists all clients in this regard, notes that savings can be quantified economically (e.g., dollars saved by avoiding bottled water) or environmentally (e.g., reduction in the amount of waste).

“We always tell planners to put the report in terms that are easy for people to understand or visualize: How many trees did you save, how many elephants worth of waste did you save, how many Olympic swimming pools of water, etc.,” she says.

Such results, which can be aggregated over one meeting or many throughout the year, can and should be prominently communicated. Options include digital signage at the event, internal and external newsletters, and as part of presentations on company matters. “Brief your official spokesperson on sustainability achievements,” McIlwraith advises. It's worth touting, and can inspire attendees and other companies to follow suit in saving the planet. **C&IT**



Credit: MGM Resorts International

The Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas is now home to the largest roof-top solar array in America.

pared with ingredients indigenous to the destination, and the use of such ingredients is ultimately better for the environment than using those shipped from far away. “Local, seasonal and sometimes organic food — all of those are sustainability initiatives, and they have gone mainstream,” Zavada observes.

And insofar as these kinds of ingredients are in the mainstream, many con-



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# Savvy Site Selection

Destination Decisions Can Make or Break Your Meeting

By Derek Reveron



Is your group motivated more by a big-city downtown hotel or sea-side beach resort? How many break rooms are required? What do attendees like to do during their down time? Which property under consideration will best help to achieve meeting goals? Do you return to a known property or try something new?

Site selection is more complicated and time-consuming than ever because

meetings are more complex, attendees have higher expectations and venues offer a greater diversity of options. Through it all, planners are expected to provide customized and unique attendee experiences.

Choose the wrong site and the meeting can bomb. "A well-selected meeting site can and should make your meeting," says Katie Reitz, senior strategic buyer, strategic accounts at ITA Group, a Des

Moines, Iowa-based company that manages corporate incentives and events. "Selecting the wrong site for your people or objectives can lead to poor attendance and a lack of attendee engagement," says Reitz.

On the other hand, adds Reitz, "Doing your homework (destination and venue research, attendee demographic analysis and having a solid grasp on meeting objectives) can lead to record-breaking at-

tendance and sales, and create engaged, motivated and satisfied attendees."

## Communication Snafus

According to Jeff O'Hara, CMP, DMCP, president, AlliedPRA New Orleans, the most frequent gaffe he sees planners make prior to site visits is a lack of due diligence with the meeting owner.

O'Hara has seen planners of all types make such a mistake. "There are lots of reasonable explanations (lack of time, meeting owner travel, the planner not wanting to burden the meeting owner, etc.)," says O'Hara. "But the result is, upon arriving onsite, we find that the meeting owner's vision can be quite different than that of the planner. We then have to change the site on the fly."

Failing to pursue due diligence with meeting stakeholders can lead to more difficulties: "Selecting a destination that

**"As a planner doing a site evaluation and selection, you need to think like an attendee to determine how they will react or be motivated by the experience."**

**Judy Meyers**  
President  
HPM Associates Inc.  
Whittier, NC

easily accessible but lacks overall appeal can be challenging to promote and (can) negatively impact attendance."

Reitz has seen planners select a venue that is too small because of reasons such as budget constraints and venue availability. "That's a big mistake, especially if the group has the potential to grow, and can negatively impact the overall experience of the attendees and wreak logistical havoc on the meeting staff," says Reitz.

Inadequate site research is another common misstep. When an event goes wrong, the most common mistake the planner makes involves a lack of preparation. "Planners who don't thoroughly research a group's history and fully understand a program's objectives relative to the physical limits of the facility will likely not have a smooth event or a happy client," says Anthony Paola, CMP, managing



vs.





director, Travel Leaders Group, a Plymouth, Minnesota-based corporate strategic meetings management company.

Prevent problems by inspecting “back-of-the house operations,” Paola advises. “Some of the most important issues can be made visible when taking a peek behind the curtains.”

## Meeting Conflicts

Another site selection nightmare results from not knowing which other groups are meeting at the same time. Larger groups can overshadow yours and decrease onsite service levels. To help prevent this, planners can negotiate service-level agreements that guarantee contract items such as the number of servers, room service wait time and bellmen.

But suppose you know which groups are in attendance during your meeting, but a hotel books additional events during your dates after you sign a contract and doesn't notify you?

That happened to Judy Meyers, owner of HPM Associates Inc., a Whittier, North Carolina-based meeting and incentive planning firm, during a two-night meeting at a hotel in Atlanta. “At the time of booking, there were no conflicting groups booked,” says Meyers.

That changed after her group arrived. “All went well on Friday, but on Saturday the hotel had taken two groups for meeting programs,” says Meyers. “One group had a space immediately adjacent to ours. It was a bible study and choral group that sang enthusiastically



**Anthony Paola, CMP**  
Managing Director, Meetings  
Operations, Sales & Strategy  
Travel Leaders Group  
Plymouth, MN

**“Other meeting planners can be the best sources of information, which is a great reason to develop your network.”**

all day and evening. Their singing, while lovely, was very annoying to my client. They could barely hear themselves think, much less accomplish their goals.”

The second group was across the hall and spilled out into the common areas of the hotel. “It was a trade show exhibiting (revealing) clothing on live models,”

says Meyers. “The bible group was not pleased with the trade show models prancing through the hallways. There were some loud and unpleasant conversations between the two groups. Food and beverage service suffered as a result, and the hotel was unresponsive in trying to solve the problems.”

Paola provides another example of the benefit of asking in advance about other scheduled meetings. “During a site inspection, I learned that a large convention was coming into the hotel on the last night of our event, which would have caused a huge disruption to our event due to the proximity of the convention space to the ballrooms,” says Paola. “Since I knew this ahead of time, I was able to work with the venue to plan how the convention could make the least impact possible on my group.”

Knowing which other groups are meeting in your venue isn't enough. Also know what those groups have planned. “In New Orleans, we often kick off meetings and general sessions with marching bands, parades, gospel choirs and other ways of getting everyone engaged and awake at 8:30 in the morning,” says O'Hara. “Will you be in the midst of an important presentation in the room next door when this happens?”

It's also good to know whether a group meeting at the same time is a competitor. “A successful event has a positive, confident vibe,” says Reitz. “It's tough to get that vibe if there's a competitor in the event space next to yours. It dampens the mood and puts you at risk of unintentionally sharing confidential or proprietary information. Our event best practices include advance inquiries to learn if a competitor is scheduled during our event, and projected venue occupancy levels during the event.”

## Wear Your Attendee Hat

Above all, think like an attendee during site selection. “The purpose of any meeting or event is to create positive results — more sales, better customer service, better operational productivity, increased loyalty to the company,” says Meyers. “As a planner doing a site evaluation and selection, you need to

think like an attendee to determine how they will react or be motivated by the experience they have at the hotel or venue. When thinking like an attendee, planners can gauge whether a site or experience would deliver enough value to draw an attendee in and satisfy their interests.”

O'Hara counsels planners to ask the following questions while wearing their attendee hats:

- How is the arrival experience?
- How far is it from guest rooms to the areas you will be using?
- When going offsite and arriving at another venue, how convenient is loading and unloading?
- Does this cause extra waiting time sitting in a vehicle without traveling?
- Are the offsite locations worth the travel time?
- If there is free time built into the program (even an hour), how would they prefer to spend it?

Meyers advises planners to consider



**Katie Reitz**  
Senior Strategic Buyer  
ITA Group  
Des Moines, IA

**“Our event best practices include advance inquiries to learn if a competitor is scheduled during our event.”**



whether attendees will feel like a VIP on the property and ask:

- Would you be wowed by the appearance of the venue?
- Would you feel welcomed and comfortable?
- Would you be looking forward to your stay?

“If you can answer yes to all of these, you are probably on the right track,” says Meyers.

## Planner References: What She Said

Planners can avoid many site selection pitfalls by seeking references from planners who have held similarly sized meetings at the same property. “Other meeting planners can be the best sources of information, which is a great reason to develop your network and be able to serve as a resource to others,” says Paola.

According to Paola, the top questions to ask other planners include:

- Would you use the facility again?
- Did you have any issues with the venue at your last event?
- Did the hotel respond adequately to alleviate issues for your group?

“Every event has its own list of important things, but those questions should be a baseline when booking any venue,” says Paola.

Reitz offers the following advice:

- Attendee feedback is top-of-the-list when getting references from other planners. Did attendees like the hotel and destination?
- Relationships and service also are keys. Was the hotel a good partner,

and was the level of service and attention to the group favorable? Was the hotel flexible to your needs?

- Were the destination and the hotel budget-friendly?
- Finally, find out if there were any surprises that could be avoided during your meeting.

Also ask planners about issues that can impede a smooth setup and take-down. “Have a good understanding of the size and location of loading docks, elevators and staging areas in the venues you select,” says O'Hara. “How much equipment can fit in the load zone and how does that affect the speed of your loading? You should lean on your DMC for this information, as things may have changed since your planner reference used the facility. DMCs get lots of clients' feedback on hotels, so use them.”





## F&B: Don't Leave a Bad Taste

Failing to diligently evaluate a site's food and beverage services can leave a bad taste in attendees' mouths. That's why it's crucial to screen a property's F&B department. "One of the most important food and beverage considerations for me is to be able to work directly with the chef very early in the booking process," says Meyers. "For certain clients, this is an essential part of 'pre-site selection' in cases where budgets must be pre-determined in order to consider the property as a viable option. Most hotels do not like to do this, but for me, it has often been a deciding factor in which site to select."

Paola suggests watching the venue's food and beverage services in action. "Consider doing a site inspection during another group's meeting so you can see how F&B service would be conducted," says Paola. "Don't overlook details such as options for dedicated F&B space. Look into issues such as distance to kitchen facilities or requirements to set up tables and buffets outside the meeting space. Ask what can be done if you are able to give meeting space back to the hotel. Will they offer a reduced financial threshold for food and beverage?"

Evaluating a site's food and beverage capabilities is largely about getting the best food at the best value. That's why it's crucial to ask about food and beverage minimums and determine the financial impact if the number of attendees grows. How far in advance do they require guaranteed attendance numbers?

Paola cites another key question to ask: "How much food and beverage is



**Jeff O'Hara, CMP, DMCP**  
President  
AlliedPRA New Orleans  
New Orleans, LA

**"You should lean on your DMC for... information. DMCs get lots of clients' feedback on hotels, so use them."**

overprepared in the event of an unexpected attendance increase?" he says. "Other items to look for include menu pricing, special meal requirement policies, service charges and surcharges as well as a venue's willingness to guarantee costs at contract."

### Site Inspection Tips

Diligent site visits go a long way toward inspiring confidence in a desti-

nation's suitability. Here are tips from planners on how to get the most out of site visits.

- Try to do a site inspection when a similarly sized group is using the property. This way, it's possible to get a good feel for what your group will experience.
- Observe the flow of guest traffic between the front desk, elevators, meeting rooms, restaurants, etc.
- Ask to taste the group's meal and pop in during a meeting.
- Talk with line staff on all levels to discuss their attitudes toward service and experiences.
- Visit without advance notice as a regular guest. Get a feel for service and explore the property without it having been prepped for you by staff. Discreetly observe the staff's service throughout the site, including front desk, concierge, restaurants and ongoing meetings.
- Should you do a virtual site inspection? Every planner has had to book a venue without visiting it first. But do a virtual visit as a last resort. There are several things that a virtual visit won't tell you, including the acoustics of meeting rooms and attendee flow throughout the hotel.
- Ensure that the site provides internet and cell phone coverage that meets your group's needs. During the site visit, check the property's bandwidth and test internet access using your own devices.
- Final tip: When you zero in on a property, don't negotiate without an event history. Get top value by providing records of past attendance, room nights, food and beverage consumption and other details. A lack of meeting history leaves planners vulnerable to paying higher rates for rooms, meeting space, food and beverage service as well as additional fees.

Above all, allot enough time throughout the site selection process to see and experience everything that's important to a group. It's the key to choosing a site that can help achieve meeting objectives and lead to a satisfying experience for attendees. **C&IT**



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## Destination

Credit: Tourism Port Douglas and Daintree

The private island resort One&Only is on Hayman Island, Queensland, Australia, in the heart of the Great Barrier Reef.

# Asia-Pacific

## Top Bucket-List Incentive and Meetings Destinations

By David Swanson

**T**he roll call of favored travel destinations in the Asia-Pacific region is an extensive list of countries that spark wanderlust. Among those favored for meetings and incentives, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Macau are all on the wish list of meeting planners and attendees everywhere.

### Australia — Bucket-List Incentive Destination

For North American clients, incentives probably make up the bulk of corporate events in the Asia-Pacific region, and one country that tops the bucket list for many is Australia. Suzanne Markarian, director of planning and purchasing at Landmark Incentive Marketing, was tasked with creating an exceptional experience for an energy industry client. “Their objective was to find that place in the world where their guests and participants would not necessarily go on their own. Australia was what the client was looking for.”

Spanning an area almost the size of the continental U.S., Australia's highlights are spread far and wide. But Markarian says that she had great planning support from Tourism Australia and Paul M. Griffin, business events manager for the Americas, and from local tourism authorities such as Business Events Sydney. “They helped us set up our site inspection,

came out to greet our clients, and even helped to underwrite some aspects of our site trip such as transportation, etc.”

Markarian selected three disparate destinations to showcase the best of Australia: Sydney, Hayman Island and Uluru—better known as Ayers Rock.

“The trip moved quickly from city to city — via private charter aircraft on some legs,” explains Markarian, reviewing an itinerary that was packed with tours and evening activities. “At Uluru, the group had a private ‘Sounds of Silence’ dinner in the bush, under the stars with a backdrop of moonlight. The evening was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, with indigenous dancers and the storytelling of a stargazer. Many were hesitant about trying the kangaroo meat, but it was delicious and the participants loved the experience — and it is what you do here.

“Sails in the Desert is lovely, and the service is great. The hotel sees quite a bit of one- and two-night stays, so there is a lot of turnaround and excitement in the lobby. The hotel recently had renovations and all is done tastefully, and the food is very good in their all-day dining restaurant, especially breakfast. You want to make the most of your time here and experience everything outside of the hotel in the bush.

“One&Only Hayman Island is not the easiest place to get to,

but it was more than worth the experience. It's a remote island in the Great Barrier Reef, and the beauty of it is matched by the exquisite style and design of the resort. All the rooms are newly renovated with all modern and highly stylized décor. The property is lush, with one of the best gyms and spas I've seen. Although many come to get out to the Great Barrier Reef, I would recommend staying a bit longer and really enjoying the resort. You can come in from Hamilton Island either by the resort's private boat or by helicopter, and then you are whisked away by a golf cart to the lobby entrance.”

Markarian continues, “F&B is excellent at the One&Only, and we provided a welcome buffet on the beach with firepits and some of the most beautiful food displays I have seen. One note for planners is that anything you may want to add has to be flown in or brought in, and it is difficult and usually not necessary. Stick with what the resort offers — they know how to deliver the best product, whether it be food, entertainment, or décor for their resort.”

The group also checked in at the Shangri-La Hotel Sydney, where they enjoyed a central location, fine dining and impeccable service that lived up to the Shangri-La reputation. “The sales team leading up to the event were excellent, and their staff, food and service delivered just as good as their promise. There's an excellent restaurant on the 36th floor called Altitudes with breathtaking views, which we privatized for one dinner. The final evening was held offsite at the Waterfront Restaurant, in one of their historic rooms overlooking the harbor and the Opera House.”

### New Zealand — Endless Wonder

A similar set of priorities faced Kim Hester, senior account executive at JNR Incorporated, as she was organizing an incentive trip for a TV broadcast media company. “First and foremost, we were shopping for a place during a time when safety and security was a big issue,” explains Hester. “We didn't want to go to Europe — we wanted, no question, safe. And I thought, New Zealand — nothing ever happens there! We were going in November (2016), so it's a good climate heading into their summer, there's stunning scenery and a diversity of activities, everybody is friendly and speaks English, and Air New Zealand has direct flights from LAX, San Francisco and Houston.”

Hester had been on a FAM to the country three years ago, and worked “a little bit” with Tourism New Zealand, but hired a DMC to handle logistics for her nine-day incentive program, titled Endless Wonder. “It was purely a reward trip, to thank top advertisers for spending money with them — all about having a great time,” adds Hester.

“Amber Murrell was the coordinator for our DMC, Seasonz Travel, and she was phenomenal — the best DMC person I've ever worked with. She's a Queenstown native, and her family goes back there for generations. But she's so committed and passionate about the country, I want to invite her to work programs in other parts of the world for me! It taught me to trust your vendors, they know the destination well. Amber was so good at advising me on what was good, bad or indifferent —



Heart-stopping bungee-jumping in New Zealand.

Credit: Tourism New Zealand

she always had the right advice. She was the glue the held the program together, and the swizzle stick that stirred the drink.”

For the flights, Hester did a contract with Air New Zealand, and they helped us book feeder air, coming from all over the U.S. “They were unbelievably helpful and cooperative, unlike any airline I've ever worked with in the world. They put our domestic carriers to shame. Their premium economy is a great option for people who couldn't afford business, but most of our group traveled in business. They blocked seats for us and even did refunds when we had last-minute issues — who else do you ever get a refund from? They were incredibly flexible and easy to work with, and they have a beautiful new lounge at LAX with showers, a buffet and an outdoor firepit — it's the nicest lounge I've been to in the U.S.”

Hester focused on two destinations, starting with two nights in Auckland, basing the group at the Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour. “There's a nice Hilton in Auckland, and it sits on water, but it caters more to wholesale tour operators. The Sofitel has an Asian feel to it, and caters more to local meetings market.” The easygoing agenda for Auckland included a full day on Waiheke Island, located 45 minutes by ferry from the city, a haven of olive groves, wineries and a thriving community of artists. The second morning featured a choice of activities before the two-hour flight to Queenstown: a sea kayak adventure, a harbor sail on an America's Cup yacht, or a city tour aboard Harley Davidsons.

“The Sofitel Queenstown Hotel and Spa has a completely different look and feel — something like a boutique hotel in a European ski town. It's great because everything is walkable, everyone can do their own thing, and I absolutely love the GM at the Sofitel Queenstown, a charming Frenchman who is so involved and committed — always right there in lobby to greet me.”

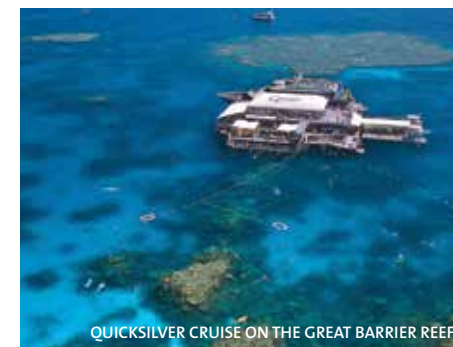
Queenstown is nothing if not flush with activities. “You have great scenery and wine country for the sedentary types, then there's high action and adventure — bungee jumping, white-water rafting, abseiling — tons and tons of hard-core adventure activities that take people out of their comfort zone, something they will never forget,” says Hester. “You take someone to (tourism adventure company) AJ Hackett Bungy who's in their 60s or 70s and ask ahead of time if they want to bungee jump, and they say ‘no.’ Then they see all their colleagues and peers, and before you know it, everyone's out there doing it. Most couldn't wait to send pics back to their kids — it was so much fun to see that reaction.”



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

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[www.quicksilver-cruises.com](http://www.quicksilver-cruises.com)

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Field of Light is a spectacular display of 50,000 illuminated glass spheres, right in front of Uluru. Artist Bruce Munro's multi-coloured globes create a dazzling expanse in the middle of the desert, covering the size of seven football fields. Add to this magical evening by arranging a camel tour for your guests, trekking past Uluru before arriving at the Field of Light to enjoy canapés and sparkling wine under the stars.

[www.ayersrockresort.com.au](http://www.ayersrockresort.com.au)

### GET HANDS-ON WITH AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE

No trip to Australia is complete without a native wildlife encounter. Located in Brisbane, Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary is the country's largest and is home to 130 of these furry marsupials. Available for up to six people, the Koala Encounter allows you to observe a health check and have your photo snapped while cuddling a koala. While you're at the Sanctuary, you can also hand-feed kangaroos and wallabies, hold a snake or giant bird of prey, or take a dingo for a walk. The Keeper for a Day tour bundles all of this into one hands-on package, providing an unparalleled wildlife experience.

[www.koala.net](http://www.koala.net)

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Spanning 243 kilometres of Victorian coastline, the Great Ocean Road is regarded as one of the world's best drives, but this rugged stretch of cliffs and crashing waves is even more spectacular from above. Melbourne Helipad's Great Ocean Road helicopter tour flies over the Great Ocean Road, taking in iconic sights such as the 12 Apostles. Touch down near the 12 Apostles for a stroll to the viewing platform, then continue by road to Loch Ard Gorge, where you can dip your toes into the Great Southern Ocean. Depending on the season, you'll be treated to a picnic lunch at the beach or a seafood feast. This six-hour round-trip is ideal for small groups – each helicopter can hold two to five people, and multiple aircraft can be arranged for groups of up to 20.

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Hester cautioned that planners need to stay flexible in New Zealand, especially with regard to the country's highly changeable weather. "You don't know how many people are going to bungee jump, you don't know how many people are going to want to buy cases of wine. We planned a lot of helicopter adventures and events where you fly out to a remote place and do a function — these are very much subject to weather. We got lucky, everything went off pretty much as planned, but we had to cut one event a bit short because it got windy."

### Singapore — Top Hub for Business

For Cvent's first-ever accounting of the top Asia-Pacific meeting destinations, it was Singapore that topped the list for 2016. Less than one-sixth the size of Rhode Island, the sovereign city-state edged out such established locations as Sydney, Bangkok and Shanghai.

The accolades aren't limited to one source: In 2016, the World Travel Awards selected Singapore's Suntec as Asia's leading Meeting and Conference Center, while the International Congress and Convention Association ranked Singapore as the top city in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East region for meetings, far ahead of the ICCA's next three destinations (Seoul, Hong Kong and Bangkok). And, for 21 years running, Singapore Airlines has been selected as the world's best carrier by readers of *Travel + Leisure* magazine.

But big things, it would seem, can come in very small packages. Singapore's GDP makes it the third-wealthiest country in the world, on a per-capita basis, and the port is the world's second busiest.

According to Jeannie Lim, the Singapore Tourism Board's executive director of conventions, meetings and incentive travel, there are three reasons the destination has an edge over other Asia-Pacific meeting options.

"We have a strategic location within Asia — Singapore is a hub for business. There are 7,000 multinational companies that have headquarters here, a mix of global and local companies, creating a pro-business environment.

"Second, we are very compact," Lim explains. Located at the southern tip of the Malaysian peninsula, the island is just 26

miles across at its widest point, and most hotels are concentrated downtown. "Over 5,000 hotel rooms are located within walking distance of Suntec — you don't have to travel two hours to reach a venue."

"The third factor is that we have a strong ecosystem of players to help build successful meetings," Lim adds. "There are 60,000 hotel rooms in Singapore covering all aspects, including mid-range and budget, and we have quite a good variety of meeting spaces."

Among Singapore's standout meeting facilities is Suntec Convention and Exhibition Centre, centrally located in the heart of the CBD and offering more than 450,000 sf of meeting space. The six-story facility received a \$130 million renovation in 2013 that automated many of the centre's functions to improve efficiencies (for example, the kitchen relies entirely on induction cooking). Most famously, the main entrance to Suntec is nicknamed the Big Picture Wall, and features the world's largest high-definition video wall — perfect for corporate branding efforts.

Singapore Expo, located just three miles from the airport, is the country's primary exhibition center, with more than 1 million sf of column-free ground-level space in 10 different halls, up to four of which can be contiguous. In the convention wing next door, an additional 130,000 sf of meeting space is available. Although located 12 miles from the CBD on the city outskirts, Singapore Expo is served by the city's comprehensive mass transit line, and two hotels offering almost 600 rooms are within walking distance to the Expo.

The 2,561-room Marina Bay Sands is without a doubt Singapore's most eye-catching hotel, and sits adjacent to the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, operated by the Las Vegas Sands Corporation. With 1.3 million sf of meeting space, the largest ballroom in Southeast Asia, and 250 meeting rooms spread across five levels, the facility can accommodate up to 45,000 delegates, making it a prime target for U.S.-based meeting planners.

But the city also has a wealth of smaller meeting facilities ideal for more intimate gatherings. The 790-room Pan Pacific Singapore at Marina has an 8,700-sf ballroom and 24 function rooms, many of which are on the executive-level 22nd floor,

Exotic architecture, like the triple-towered Marina Bay Sands, animates the Singapore skyline.



Credit: Singapore Tourism Board



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View of the Cotai Strip in Macau.

Credit: Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel, Cotai Central

with Herman Miller chairs and ample natural light. The 769-room Fairmont Singapore and its sister property next door, the 1,261-room Swisshotel The Stamford, are tied to the Raffles City Convention Centre, which offers 70,000 sf of meeting space, including 27 meeting rooms and three ballrooms up to 24,000 sf and the largest chandelier in the world. The Fairmont lobby and all rooms in the north wing of the hotel were renovated in 2014.

Singapore's location — a 17-hour flight from San Francisco — might be a deal-breaker for some North American-based meeting planners. With other Asia-Pacific cities reached by shorter nonstop flights from other North American cities, why organize an event in Singapore? "We take safety and security very seriously," says Lim. "Meeting planners want to know destinations they are considering offer a stable environment." Additionally, visitors from most countries are not required to obtain a visa prior to travel. "So you get the value of meeting people from across the region. If you want to do business globally this is the place to come."

## Macau — Beyond Gambling

Even smaller than Singapore and yet a powerhouse in its own right, Macau is an autonomous territory of China located 40 miles west of Hong Kong. With an economy driven largely by tourism, Macau's gambling income is larger than Las Vegas', and the city has a rapidly growing cache of large hotels with extensive meeting facilities, along with a history tied to the Portuguese Empire — sovereignty was handed back to China in 1999. As with Hong Kong, a Chinese visa is not a prerequisite for travel to Macau.

"Although Macau is only 12 square miles in size and has a population of 650,000, there are over 20 historic sites that are part of Macau's UNESCO World Heritage status, and the destination hosts the Formula 3 racing event each November," ex-

plains Gabriel Wong, head of meetings and incentives for Pacific World, one of the premiere DMCs in the Asia-Pacific region. Wong says that he often works with the tourist board to create a package to fit client expectations. "The Macau Government Tourist Office is very active in promoting Macau as an event destination, and often offers specials such as private immigration lines or a discount for groups staying more than three nights."

And, following a Chinese anti-corruption crackdown that led to 26 consecutive months of gaming revenue declines through last summer, Macau tourism is no doubt counting on the MICE market to help make up for a recent slowdown in business.

Last May, Wong oversaw a meeting for an IT group of 150 involved in computer processing at the Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel, Cotai Central, the city's largest hotel (and the world's largest Sheraton-branded hotel), with 4,001 rooms and a 52,645-sf pillar-less ballroom. "The extensive amount of space Sheraton Macao brings to the table makes it easy to accommodate large groups for meetings and breakout sessions," says Wong. "As we required many breakout rooms for breakout sessions for different purposes, the Sheraton Macao could easily transform the function to satisfy our needs. Even if you have a huge setup with a large stage, or screens with rear projection, the hotel is able to cater."

Wong noted the careful attention provided by the Sheraton's event team. "They are very experienced and were always available to assist in any request, from AV technical support to catering. They were also detail oriented, from the digital signage arrangement, to a complex stage setup, where all hardware was always ready before arrival."

The hotel has more than 20 check-in counters which can operate at the same time, along with a smaller check-in area, which is available for private group check-in. The hotel has

interconnections to adjacent hotel properties such as The St. Regis Macao and Conrad Macao.

"Pacific World strives to offer authentic experiences that allow clients to live like locals through curiosity and discovery," says Wong. "Sometimes we must think outside of the box, especially in smaller destinations such as Macau where options are limited, and it is necessary to go offsite. There are a few ideal venues and restaurants in Macau that suit our clients for offsite dinner purposes, and one of my personal favorites is the Pousada de Coloane. It's a hotel with only 28 rooms, but they have a beautiful open area in the front of the restaurant, which can accommodate over 280 guests for a cocktail event."

One recommendation Wong offers is to schedule events mid-week. "Hotels in Macau are always full on weekends, as there are a lot of tour groups coming in from China for gambling. The only challenge about the destination is that there is not an influx of international flights going directly to Macau. Most American and European participants will need to transfer to the jetfoil from Hong Kong, but this is a stress-free and quick process."

That transfer will become even easier at the end of this year, when the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao bridge is scheduled to open. The 31-mile, \$10.6 billion highway — which starts next to the Hong Kong International Airport — includes an undersea tunnel and an 18.4-mile-long bridge. The transfer time from Hong Kong to Macau is expected to be reduced to just 30 minutes.

## New and Noteworthy

In December 2016, the 634-room **JW Marriott Hotel Singapore South Beach** opened, located close to the Marina Bay entertainment and business districts. Consisting of both historic and newly constructed buildings, and with interiors designed

by French designer Philippe Starck and architecture by British architects Foster and Partners, the hotel's guest rooms are outfitted with smart technology, including up to seven USB outlets per room, and a Wi-Fi-enabled mobile phone that allows guests to receive calls anywhere within the property. The hotel has 18,400 sf of indoor and outdoor event and meeting space, including a 5,600-sf Grand Ballroom housed in a 1930s historic Drill Hall, which features a dramatic 11,520-light Forest of Lights design by Philippe Starck. The hotel's 15 meeting rooms are housed in Assembly, one of the property's restored historic buildings.

The hotel market in Macau is experiencing rapid growth. The \$4.1 billion, 1,706-room **Wynn Palace** resort debuted last August and features a \$125 million art collection, a Bellagio-style water show, an aerial tram system and giant shopping center. The resort, Wynn's second in Macau, has a 17,373-sf Grand Theater, suitable for banquet seating up to 960, plus four breakouts and two boardrooms up to 1,615 sf.

In September 2016, Wynn rival Las Vegas Sands opened the \$3 billion **Parisian Macao**, the company's fifth resort in the city, and replete with its own Eiffel Tower replica. The hotel has 56,000 sf of meeting space, including a 36,600-sf Grand Ballroom, suitable for a gala dinner for 2,600 guests.

Currently under construction, the \$3.1 billion, 1,500-room **MGM Cotai** is expected to open in the second half of 2017.

The **Four Seasons Hotel Jakarta** opened last June on Jalan Gatot Subroto within the city's Central Business District, at the all-new Capital Place, an award-winning architectural landmark by César Pelli. The hotel offers 19,400 sf of flexible function space, including a Grand Ballroom with its own prefunction area and adjacent Garden Terrace.

With the December 2016 debut of the 1,360-room **Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park**, Marriott Hotels opened its largest property in the Asia-Pacific region. Formerly known as the Imperial Queen's Park Hotel, the property underwent a multi-million-dollar facelift and features 54,000 sf of function space across more than 30 different venues.

Scheduled to open in the second quarter of 2017, **Hotel Jen Beijing** will be part of the China World Trade Center development in Beijing's CBD. The hotel's facilities will include a coworking hub paired with creative meeting spaces, the only gastropub in the CBD and a 37,674-sf world-class health club with facilities to meet diverse fitness requirements.

As the PyeongChang Winter Olympics approaches in February 2018, the **Korea MICE Bureau** announced international congresses and corporate incentive tours recently secured. Among them, the largest convention expected in Korea in 2017 will be the UIA 2017 Seoul World Architects Congress, which will be held in the COEX (convention and exhibition) complex in Seoul. The event is expected to draw 30,000 participants, 5,000 of which will be foreign delegates from 120 countries. Last year, Korea successfully hosted the Rotary International Convention at the Korean International Exhibition & Convention Center (KINTEX), bringing more than 21,000 international delegates to Korea.

**C&IT**



## On The Move



ROMERO



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MAYO



DOUGHTY

The Kimpton Hotel Zamora in St. Pete Beach, Florida, has named **Paul Romero** as director of sales and marketing. He was most recently senior sales executive at Hilton St. Petersburg.

Kimpton Hotel Monaco Denver has named **Brittany Gripp** as group sales manager. She was group sales manager for The Driskell Hotel in Austin, Texas.

DoubleTree Resort by Hilton, Myrtle

Beach Oceanfront, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, has named **Alan Fabris** as director of sales and marketing. He was most recently area director of sales and marketing for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.

**Joseph M. DeMille Sr.** was named director of sales and marketing for The Chattanooga in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He most recently was the director of sales and marketing for Turnberry Isle Miami.

The Omni Hotel at The Battery Atlanta has named **Jennifer Mayo** as director of sales and marketing. She was director of sales and marketing for the Omni Charlottesville Hotel in Virginia.

The Adolphus, Dallas, Texas, has appointed **Jodi Doughty** as director of sales and marketing. Most recently, she was the vice president of sales and marketing for Remington Hotels' independent luxury division. **C&IT**

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