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# AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2014 ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES

THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION CONVENTION & MEETING MANAGEMENT



## Survival of the Smartest

The Keys to Career Advancement  
PAGE 10

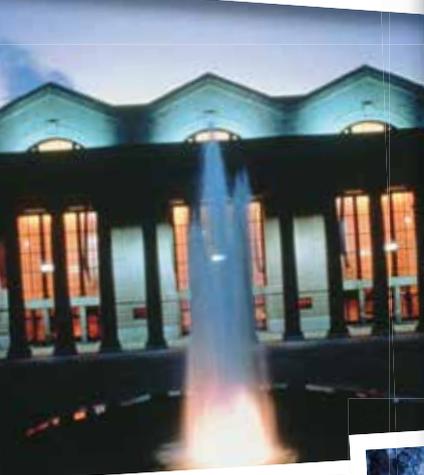
## Attractive & Affordable

The SMERF Site Selection Challenge  
PAGE 16

# Global Meetings

Create a Passport to Success  
PAGE 20

Phelps R. Hope, CMP, Senior Vice President, Meetings and Expositions for Kellen Meetings and PCMA's 2014 Global Meetings Executive of the Year



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THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT

August / September 2014

Volume 7 • Number 4

## Departments

**4** Publisher's Page

**6** News & Notes

**7** Snapshots

**50** Career Track

**50** Reader Services

## ViewPoint

**8** Launching a Successful Certification Program

What You Should Know to Get One Off the Ground

By Christine Murphy Peck

## Destination

**44** California

An Expanding Convention Scene Up and Down the Coast

By Patrick Simms

## Features

**10** Survival of the Smartest

Career Advancement Depends More Now Than Ever on Continuing Education and Certifications

By John Buchanan

**16** Attractive & Affordable

How SMERF Planners Take On the 'Double A' Site Selection Challenge

By Patrick Simms

**20** Planning Events Around the Globe

Do Your Homework and Create a Passport to Success

By Karen Brost

**26** 2014 Distinctive Achievement Award Winners

The Best of the Best



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Credit: Draco Noir Photography/ Face and Body Art International Convention



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# Never Assume!



With the world shrinking and competition growing, more associations are strategizing to become global leaders in their field of interest, expand membership beyond borders and build influence in key markets abroad. So it's a good bet that you, the meeting planner, will at some point be tasked with organizing an international meeting on foreign soil. But all bets are off if you assume that the skills used here will transfer there. You know what they say about "assume".... "You've got to go overseas with your meeting planning knowledge, believing that you are a novice," says Phelps R. Hope, CMP, senior vice president, meetings and expositions for Kellen Meetings, who graces our cover. "You have to ask questions at the most basic level. You can't assume ANYTHING," he emphasizes. Hope, who received PCMA's 2014 Global Meetings Executive of the Year Award, should know. Over a 30-year career, he has planned meetings and conferences in 27 different countries on six continents, and oversees more than 50 global meetings per year. In our story on page 20, "Planning Events Around the Globe," Hope offers advice and anecdotes based on his considerable experience on issues such as language, cultural differences, contract negotiations and more. He notes that a planner's skill set needs to include "a certain amount of MacGyver" to deal with the unexpected, which is always a given. Above all, it's doing your homework: "Are you paying attention? Are you being inquisitive? Are you using the resources around you?" he asks.

Which brings me to our education feature on page 10, "Survival of the Smartest," where that "assume" word pops up again. Timothy Arnold, CMP, CMM, regional vice president of HPN Global, notes that because meeting planners' roles have become much more complex and challenging, with responsibilities that go way beyond logistics, "as a planner, you have to be educated as to how to handle those kinds of responsibilities. You can't just assume you know everything you need to know." From negotiating complicated contracts to avoiding legal liabilities, to staying up to speed on technology to managing return on objective for the organization and return on experience for the attendees, planners are under the gun like never before, while at the same time expected to do more with less.

As such, career survival and advancement depends upon continuing education, says Arnold: "I've found that being a CMP and CMM gives me a lot of credibility. ...It shows that you're making a lifelong commitment to becoming a better meeting planner seeking constant learning."

**Harvey Grotsky**  
Publisher

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## Atlantic City's Reinvention Plan Targets Meetings and Conventions

**ATLANTIC CITY, NJ** — Responding to the closings of four casino resorts, Atlantic City Mayor Don Guardian, Casino Reinvestment Development Authority Executive Director John Palmieri, Mark Giannantonio, president and CEO of Resorts Casino Hotel and Atlantic City Alliance President Liza Cartmell recently informed the public that significant progress is being made in the destination's ongoing transition to a multi-faceted tourism destination that is not focused solely on gaming.

"We have made great strides through the public-private partnership between the CRDA, ACA and Meet AC with the state of New Jersey, Atlantic County and the city," Palmieri said. "We are on track to drive \$1 billion into the Tourism District within these first five years, which is all part of our plan that focuses on four key initiatives: attraction visitation, building the visitor experience, targeting meeting and conventions and investing in neighborhoods and job training."

There are also a significant number of pre-development concepts in the works, including the renovation of Tropicana and a new public market that will serve as an anchor attraction connecting Atlantic Avenue to the Boardwalk. And in an effort to capture more of the critical mid-week meetings and conventions business, Meet AC was created as a non-profit and is expected to add a potential 251,000 group room nights in the next three to five years.

"We know that we are a tourism destination that has a huge amount of scale and enormous potential," Giannantonio said. "It's important to remember that there are still dozens of nightclubs, more than 100 restaurants, 15,000 hotel rooms and a full roster of year-round headline entertainment for visitors to enjoy. We also boast one of the most successful outlet shopping centers on the East Coast."

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

## Thayer Acquires Diplomat Resort & Spa; Will Join Hilton's Curio Brand

**NEW YORK, NY** — Thayer Lodging Group and its institutional partners have acquired The Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa in Hollywood, Florida. The property will be renamed the Diplomat Resort & Spa and will join Hilton Worldwide's newest brand, Curio – A Collection by Hilton, in October 2014. Thayer also will embark on a \$100 million enhancement initiative for the oceanfront property later this year.

South Florida's Diplomat Resort encompasses 998 rooms and suites, numerous restaurants and a spa, along with more than 200,000 sf of meeting and convention space. The hotel remains open and fully operational and will continue to conduct business as usual during the transition. All existing guest reservations will be honored.

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

## Loews Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Orlando to Open in 2016

**ORLANDO, FL** — When it opens in Orlando in the summer of 2016, the new Loews Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Orlando will feature a colorful, Caribbean atmosphere along with more than 131,000 sf of meeting space. Located between Cabana Bay Beach Resort and Loews Royal Pacific Resort, the hotel will be built around a lush, tropical lagoon. Together, the two resorts will have 272,000 sf of combined meeting space and 2,000 rooms.



**Tisch**

"We are excited to continue our growth plans at Loews Hotels by building another hotel with our long-standing partners at Universal Orlando," said Jonathan Tisch, chairman of Loews Hotels & Resorts. "This project marks a first for our company, as we will connect the meeting space at Loews Sapphire Falls Resort with the meeting space at Loews Royal Pacific Resort, giving planners new options for their meetings and events in Orlando."

Loews Sapphire Falls Resort's 131,000 sf of meeting space includes a 41,000-sf ballroom, a 32,000-sf second ballroom, 15,000 sf of additional meeting room space and 43,000 sf of prefunction space. This adds to the recently announced expansion of Loews Royal Pacific Resort's meeting space from 85,000 sf to more than 140,000 sf. To book for 2016, go to [www.uomeetingsandevents.com](http://www.uomeetingsandevents.com) or call 877-823-2042.



*Rendering of the new Loews Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Orlando.*



**1** Lady Antebellum wowed the audience at Schermerhorn Symphony Center in the heart of downtown Nashville during the 2014 ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition held at Music City Center in Nashville. Here the three members of Lady Antebellum pose with ASAE President and CEO John H. Graham IV, FASAE, CAE, and his family. **2** Ally Jenkins, ASAE manager, conferences, is flanked by Nashville TV stars Charles Esten and Clare Bowen at the ASAE Annual

Meeting, which boasted record-breaking attendance and showcased Nashville at its finest. **3** Association Conventions & Facilities Publisher Harvey Grotzky meets Constable Philippe Richard of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at Canada's booth at the 2014 ASAE Annual Meeting. **4** Stopping by the Reno booth at ASAE is David Wise, an Olympian from Reno, Nevada, who is the first-ever Olympic gold medalist in men's ski halfpipe. Wise poses with Chris Baum, president and CEO of the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority. **5** ISES Live, Seattle 2014, was held in August at The Westin Hotel. Produced by the International Special Events Society, ISES Live held a reception in Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park and a President's Reception at the Space Needle's Skyline level. **6** Immediate Past Chair of the Florida Society of Association Executives (FSAE) Jim Ayotte, CAE, (l) and 2014 Executive of the Year Rusty Payton, CAE, at the FSAE Annual Meeting held at the Hilton Orlando in July. **7** (1st row) Drew Eason CAE, and Chrissy Tallman, CAE, CMP, enjoy the FSAE conference with two fellow attendees. The 2015 Annual Conference will be held July 15-17 at the Renaissance Vinoy Resort and Golf Club in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Credits: 1. & 2. Ann Richardson, 5. www.mikenakamuraphotography.com, 6. & 7. Adrian Amos

# Launching a Successful Certification Program

Christine  
Murphy Peck



## What You Should Know to Get One Off the Ground

Professional workers are facing increasing job complexities and more demands on their knowledge base. Naturally, they are turning to their representative associations to provide education with demonstrated proof of learning. In short, they want certification.

In January, the U.S. Census Bureau released a report based on data collected in 2012 that showed more than 50 million U.S. adults had obtained a professional certification, license or certificate that was separate from an academic degree from a college or university. Among the findings:

- 96 percent obtained a professional certification or license for work-related reasons, and the same percentage reported that the certification can be used to get a job with any employer in the field.
- About three-quarters of these credentials were required for the current or most recent job.
- The most common fields of certification were education (17 percent), nursing and nurse assisting (13 percent), and other medical or health care fields (12 percent).
- More than 90 percent of professional certification and license holders took courses and had to demonstrate skills on the job or pass a test or exam in order to earn them.
- About two-thirds of adults who held a professional certification or license had to take periodic tests or continuing education credits in order to maintain it.

Launching and maintaining a successful certification program is an endeavor that involves many years of commitment, countless volunteer and staff hours, subject-matter expert input and considerable cost. Yet, the results will have lasting impact on your members and your organization.

### INVALUABLE BENEFITS

Certification provides credibility, signifying that professionals are competent in their respective fields and were successfully tested in specific subject matters. Through a structured continuing education program, certificants can document they have maintained their knowledge base in a given industry.

Accredited certification programs also help protect the

public's safety by ensuring that the commission members who grant the certifications are also currently certified and knowledgeable in that particular field and subject area.

For the organization, certifications offer options for a long-term revenue stream via certification preparation and continuing education offerings, and there is the potential for establishing a program approval process for organizations wishing to be recognized as continuing education providers.

One of SmithBucklin's client organizations reports an average 10 percent increase of new certificants year to year (based on data from 2009 to 2012). Another client reports an increase of 20 percent since 2010.

Certification also impacts your members' professional growth and development. One of our organizations reports that 27 percent of their certificants received a salary increase as a result of earning their credential. For another, achieving certification is part of the criteria for promotion among their military members.

A certification program touches all aspects of an organization. With a commitment to research, program development, policy and procedure establishment, and operations implementation, a certification program can be an extremely valuable asset to your organization by ensuring your members achieve professional status, recruiting and retaining members, and providing motivation for members to participate in your organization's educational events.

So, how do these programs get started and what steps need to be taken to ensure a certification program's success? What is the secret?

### ESTABLISH THE OBJECTIVE

The first step is to determine the objectives of your certification program: Have you identified a gap in competency, service or knowledge in your industry that a new certification program can fill? Frame your objective around that need.

Such objectives could be to increase visibility, enhance the profession, establish an industry standard, denote levels of competence, or all of the above. Answering the "why" question is critical to guiding your future decisions.

## CONDUCT RESEARCH

Successful program leaders test their concepts in the marketplace by determining audience, surveying members and their employers, analyzing the competition and reviewing potential models for the certification program.

First, you must determine your target market. Who would find value in a certification program provided by your organization? Who would pay for the training, certification examination and continuing education?

Plan surveys and focus group discussions with potential certificants. This should include your current members and industry professionals who would benefit from a certification program.

The “marketplace” includes identifying potential competitors. Who else is out there offering similar types of certification? How many of your members are currently certified by other organizations? Have they identified those certifications in your membership database?

Most important, this phase should connect with the people who employ your members. What value do employers see in certification in general? Do they prefer hiring certified candidates over noncertified? What certifications are they currently seeking in job candidates? How do they view a certification offered by your organization? Would your program provide a leg up for candidates?

This is also an excellent time to speak candidly with the leadership of related organizations who are not competitors but who have established successful certification programs in their own industries. Ask other organizations about the challenges they faced, how they overcame them, the benefits of their certification program and what they would do differently.

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Armed with the data, you can make your “go or no-go” decision. Don’t be in love with your own idea so much that you are tempted to overrule analysis that finds a certification program is not the right answer. You could potentially save your organization thousands of dollars that can be put toward another useful endeavor.

Still on the fence? If the intention is truly to benefit your members and the industry, then examine other possibilities. Consider pairing or partnering with another organization to provide content for a new program or sharing the expense of a combined program.

If your analysis favors a certification program that would add value to your members, their employers and market perspective, you should move forward with establishing the foundation of that future program.

One of the first steps should include determining if you

want your program accredited by an external organization. This allows you to start mapping the structure of your program toward the accreditation requirements at the outset, rather than having to go back and restructure at a later date.

You’ll also want to engage the services of a testing vendor or a psychometrician. The process involves conducting a Job Task Analysis (JA or JTA) — defining what work or tasks your future certificants will need to complete and what competencies they should have to perform their jobs successfully. Then, you’ll develop a set of competencies, determine eligibility criteria and establish a databank of examination questions (called “items”), which you will use to build your exam.

## DEVELOP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Often left as an afterthought, a carefully and strategically developed set of policies is critical to the future success of any certification program. Here are some examples:

- Several SmithBucklin client organizations require that a certain percentage of continuing education credits must come from the sponsoring organization or by an organization that is approved by the sponsoring organization. This enables the organizations to drive revenue through selling their own products and services as well as by approving other organizations (including their chapters or affiliates) to offer programs and provide continuing education credits — meaning they too will earn revenue from the event.
- Another option is to grant members a certain percentage of continuing education credits from related organizations. This allows for partnership opportunities with like organizations and potential revenue-sharing opportunities.
- We’ve also seen success in rewarding volunteer service with continuing education credits. Volunteering credits include serving on committees, writing articles for the organization’s journal or newsletter, writing test questions for the examination or presenting educational programs and webinars. All of these options lead to increased engagement in the organization and provide for a well-qualified cadre of volunteers.

SmithBucklin encourages its client organizations to take this entire certification process in steps and to commit for the long haul. Even if your research shows that a certification program may not be the best option, the discoveries you make along the way can help identify opportunities for new membership, products and services. Overall, undertaking a certification study often provides useful data for plotting the future direction of your organization.

AC&F

*Christine Murphy Peck is senior director, education and learning services at SmithBucklin, an association management and services company.*  
[www.smithbucklin.com](http://www.smithbucklin.com)

# Survival of the Smartest

By John Buchanan

**A**s the meeting planning profession has evolved over the last 50 years, ongoing education and professional certifications such as the venerable CMP credential have always been important.

Today, however, in a much-changed post-recession meeting industry, they are more important than ever — not just for career advancement, but also for career survival.

Timothy Arnold, CMP, CMM, regional vice president at The Colony, Texas-based HPN Global, an independent meeting planning organization that has many U.S. and international associations as clients, observes that education and certification are more important than ever to planners. “I’m personally not looking for a job, because I love the organization I work for and the association clients I have, but I have seen a lot of job postings lately for meeting planners,” he says. “And I’d say 90 percent of them say they require, or least prefer, at least a CMP certification. It used to just be nice to have your CMP. But now, because the meeting industry is so competitive, I think a CMP credential and ongoing education are requirements for an ongoing career. And one reason for that is that associations want someone they know has the experience and education to step into the job and start being effective right away,



Greg Melia, CAE  
Chief Member and Volunteer  
Relations Officer, ASAE  
Washington, DC

***“Meeting planners are the boots on the ground when it comes to making sure that attendees will have a truly exceptional experience and that the time they will spend at the meeting is well organized and delivers real value for attendees.”***

## Career Advancement Depends More Now Than Ever on Continuing Education and Certifications

as opposed to on-the-job learning. And that’s especially true for major job titles in major associations.”

Nevertheless, Arnold says, education and certification remain topics that many meeting planners don’t spend much time thinking about or pursuing. “But there are also a lot of planners who do understand how important it is and pursue it,” he says.”

And in the future, he says, the career gap between those who do and don’t will continue to widen.

Greg Melia, CAE, chief member and volunteer relations officer at ASAE, cites two primary reasons why education and certification are so important in 2014.

“The first is the external environment,” Melia says. “Associations are looking more and more to planners to negotiate the very best deals for all of the different aspects that go into a meeting today. And that is more complicated than it used to be. It’s not just a question of dates and space. It’s also a question of whether that space will actually be effective for modern adult learning, or whether it’s accommodating for people with disabilities, or whether it’s attractive, aesthetically, in terms of what a cutting-edge meeting is all about these days.”

The second reason, he says, is that following in the wake of their corporate peers, association planners are now expected to be more strategic in their thinking, rather than just tactical. “No longer are meeting planners simply taking direction from others and being asked to book hotel rooms,” Melia says. “They are the boots on the ground when it comes to making sure that attendees will have a truly exceptional experience and that the time they will spend at the meeting is well organized and delivers real value for attendees.”



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Deborah Sexton, president and CEO of PCMA, and a longtime leader and innovator in educational resources for meeting and convention planners, agrees that education is critical to career development today. “That’s because for meeting planners, things are changing very, very rapidly in our industry,” she says, adding that the recession of 2008–2010 permanently changed the meeting industry. The role of meeting planner, Sexton says, is much more demanding and challenging today than it has ever been in the past. By definition, then, planners must have broader skills and be more efficient than ever before. And that requires ongoing education for career survival. “The downturn in the economy might have played a specific role in speeding those things up,” Sexton says, “but even before the recession, you could see these changes coming.”

As a veteran and highly credentialed planner, Arnold concurs that the role has become considerably more complex and challenging since the recession and that the ongoing meeting industry downsizing and planner attrition represents a permanent change — typically noted with the now infamous “do more with less” mantra.

“But another aspect of it today is that associations realize that

meeting planners have a large impact on the financial commitments being made by the association,” Arnold says. “For example, planners now have to understand and sign complicated contracts that involve large amounts of potential penalties for things like attrition or cancellation. Those kinds of issues are incredibly important now because of their financial implications if things don’t go as planned, and the association does not deliver on its commitments. The legal liabilities of planning a meeting today are more important than ever. And as a planner, you have to be educated as to how to handle those kinds of responsibilities. You can’t just assume you know everything you need to know.”

### **THE TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE**

Not surprisingly, given the pace at which it continues to transform meetings for both planners and attendees, technology is the topic for which most planners need education, Sexton says, adding that it’s now difficult for planners to stay abreast of what’s required of them in order to be fully functional and efficient. “In that sense, technology has been both a blessing and a curse,” Sexton says. “And that’s an area where planners, who are already overworked and in



many instances looking at downsized staffs, really need to stay up with what's going on. And in a practical sense, that means learning to use constantly evolving technology to do more with less."

And one clear example of technology that planners must learn about, Sexton says, is digital and hybrid events. "That's a topic that is not going away, so meeting professionals are going to have to learn how to take advantage of these digital and hybrid technologies," she says. If they do not, they and their organizations will be left behind as the future becomes now.

Sexton recommends, as one educational path, the Virtual Edge Institute, which offers certification as a digital event strategist. "They provide a very good basic education on how to deliver a digital event," Sexton says.

And one key issue, she says, is to learn to use digital events during the year to drive attendance to an association's major meetings, such as their annual convention.

Still another category of rapidly evolving technology that requires education, Sexton says, is the constantly growing list of meeting-specific apps available via mobile technology platforms to impact the attendee experience before, during and after the meeting. "I get at least one call a day now from planners asking me about the new best app of the day that's out there," she says. "And it's very hard to stay abreast of what really is out there if you don't take the time to make that a priority in how you do your job."

PCMA has increasingly made a commitment at its major events to showcase the latest technologies and demonstrate to planners how to use them and what they can do for the process of planning and hosting events. "And what that's all about, when you get down to it," Sexton says, "is delivering a better experience for everyone involved when you do a meeting."

Elizabeth Antonopoulos, CMP, CMM, events planner at the Connecticut Education Association in Hartford, Connecticut, agrees that technology is one of the most vital areas of planner education today.

Active in her local chapter of MPI, one of her favorite educational events last year was a social media seminar. "And anytime there is a seminar related to technology, I definitely go to that," Antonopoulos says, because that's a topic that is always evolving and is more and more complex."

She's also been learning lately about gamification, the hottest technology topic of the moment. "It's interactive and it's fun," she says. But, she says, she could not find any educational content about gamification anywhere. "I had to do the homework and educate myself about it," she says.

## THE NATURE OF MEETINGS

Yet another critical area of planner education revolves around the fact that the very notion of what constitutes a well-planned and executed meeting is changing as new breakthroughs in brain science and the discipline of adult learning have spawned a new

The PCMA 2014 Education Conference, held in Toronto in June, experimented with a live case study in content delivery as it launched its open-spaced learning format to provide additional networking opportunities as well as deliver a new more collaborative way to learn.

Credit: Jacob Slaton Photography



Elizabeth Antonopoulos,  
CMP, CMM  
Events Planner  
Connecticut Education Association  
Harford, CT

***“Meetings now have to be much more interactive. And you have to incorporate smartphones and tablets into the meeting...you have to learn to incorporate things like real-time polling into your meeting during the sessions.”***

focus on so-called meeting architecture, or the fundamental elements or practical requirements of a truly successful and impactful meeting that genuinely delivers a return on investment.

“A good example of that is PCMA’s recent education conference in Toronto,” Sexton says. “We had day one, which was more like your traditional opening general session and concurrent sessions. Then came a networking luncheon and then more meeting sessions and a reception. But the next day was an open space learning environment. We were in exactly the same meeting space, but it was cleared out of the old, traditional general session seating and you had open space, which meant you could go into any one of four quadrants and also into the center of the room and learn different kinds of things, in smaller environments, in shorter periods of time. That’s the real future of meetings and how you engage people.”

Antonopoulos agrees that the nature and sophistication of meetings are changing.

“People are no longer interested in sitting in a room and listening to talking heads give presentations,” she says. “Meetings now have to be much more interactive. And you have to incorporate smartphones and tablets into the meeting, since people have them and are going to be using them one way or the other. So you have to learn to incorporate things like real-time polling into your meeting during the sessions.”

At the same time, the fundamental concept of delivering education at a conference is changing. “The way people want education delivered is changing,” she says. “And it’s not just about millennials versus Generation X or baby boomers. In my opinion, it’s not about that at all. It’s about the perception of time deprivation and how people learn and what kind of educational approach individual people like. So there are a lot of different ways today in which people are experiencing education. And as a planner, you have to learn what those are and how to work with them to deliver the experience your attendees want and expect.”

## INDUSTRY RESOURCES AND OPTIONS

While PCMA offers its much-respected annual education

conference as its flagship event, ASAE’s flagship educational initiative is its 11-year-old Great Ideas Conference, held each March for about 700 attendees. “What planners find at Great Ideas is in-practice demonstration of cutting edge and experimental ways to present information,” Melia says. “For example, we’ve used formats like game shows, sessions where people walk around and share wisdom as they walk, and a creativity lounge that uses things like Play-Doh to talk about organizational change.”

Other ASAE planner-specific educational resources include its Business of Meetings certificate program. “It helps position the planner for the next step in their career when it comes to strategic planning,” Melia says.

ASAE also offers topic-specific online courses in meeting management that are open to both members and non-members, with members getting a discount on fees.

Research done by ASAE Foundation also is vital to the industry, Melia says. “We have been working in collaboration with the Cornell University School of Hospitality to conduct research on the future of meetings and expositions and to look at new models for better events,” he says. A new research report, Current and Emerging Trends of Trade Shows and Assessment of Stakeholder Preferences is now available at [www.asaefoundation.org](http://www.asaefoundation.org).

And both CMP and CMM credentials remain extremely important to planners who want a long career with steady advancement.

“I definitely think that planners who do not have certifications

***“Meeting professionals are going to have to learn how to take advantage of these digital and hybrid technologies. If they do not, they and their organizations will be left behind as the future becomes now.”***



Deborah Sexton  
President and CEO  
PCMA  
Chicago, IL

and ongoing education should pursue them,” Antonopoulos says, “because there are a lot of little details in our industry that if you understand them fully will significantly help you in your contract negotiations and allow you to save your organizations tens of thousands in dollars over the course of the year. And the CMP course teaches you to do that.”

And as your career develops, she says, the CMM credential becomes more important, because it helps you assume more of a leadership role in your organization. “And it’s also related more to people who are managing a large number of meetings rather than just planning a relative few,” Antonopoulos says. “It also helps

you be a better manager of people, and that's important because there are always a lot of moving parts and a lot of people involved in planning a major meeting. And all of those people have to report to someone, and that's another way that a CMM certification is important to have."

She attends a few educational events a year including MPI educational events at her local chapter. "I tend to go to the serious educational events," she says, "such as hearing a guest speaker or hearing a panel discussion, rather than the networking events."

Arnold is active in PCMA. He has been at both its major meetings so far this year, including its annual education conference. "I have found that industry-wide, PCMA has the best educational resources of anybody out there," he says.

He also seeks out the smartest veteran meeting planners he can find, and when he goes to their city, he asks them to meet for breakfast or lunch — or even cup of coffee. "And being able to sit

***"I read business books, management books, leadership books, customer service books. I'm always reading some kind of book so I can learn something and expand my skills. My goal is to learn continually."***



Timothy Arnold, CMP, CMM  
Regional Vice President  
HPN Global  
The Colony, TX

there and talk with these titans of the industry, I think, is the best education you can get," Arnold says, "because they've been doing the job extremely well for 25 or 30 years, or even more. And all it costs you is breakfast or lunch."

He also is an avid reader, and he notes that reading is almost a lost art in today's hyper-busy world. "I read business books, management books, leadership books, customer service books," he says. "I'm always reading some kind of book so I can learn something and expand my skills. My goal is to learn continually. And one of the ways I do that is to read a lot of books, because I spend so much time on planes."

Ongoing education is particularly important to him, Arnold says, because he is young.

"I'm 34 years old and that's fairly young for this industry," he says. "But I grew up in the industry. And it's often difficult to gain credibility if you don't have the education and certifications. I've found that being a CMP and CMM gives me a lot of credibility. I'm no longer just seen as a young guy that's coming up. I'm seen as a peer. Of course, certification does not automatically make you a better meeting planner. But it definitely shows that you're making a lifelong commitment to becoming a better meeting planner by seeking constant learning."

Education has always been important to him, Arnold says. "And it's always going to be important to me. I'm always going to do everything I can to get better at my job."

Likewise, Antonopoulos says, the credibility that comes with certification and education is more important than ever before to a planner's career path.

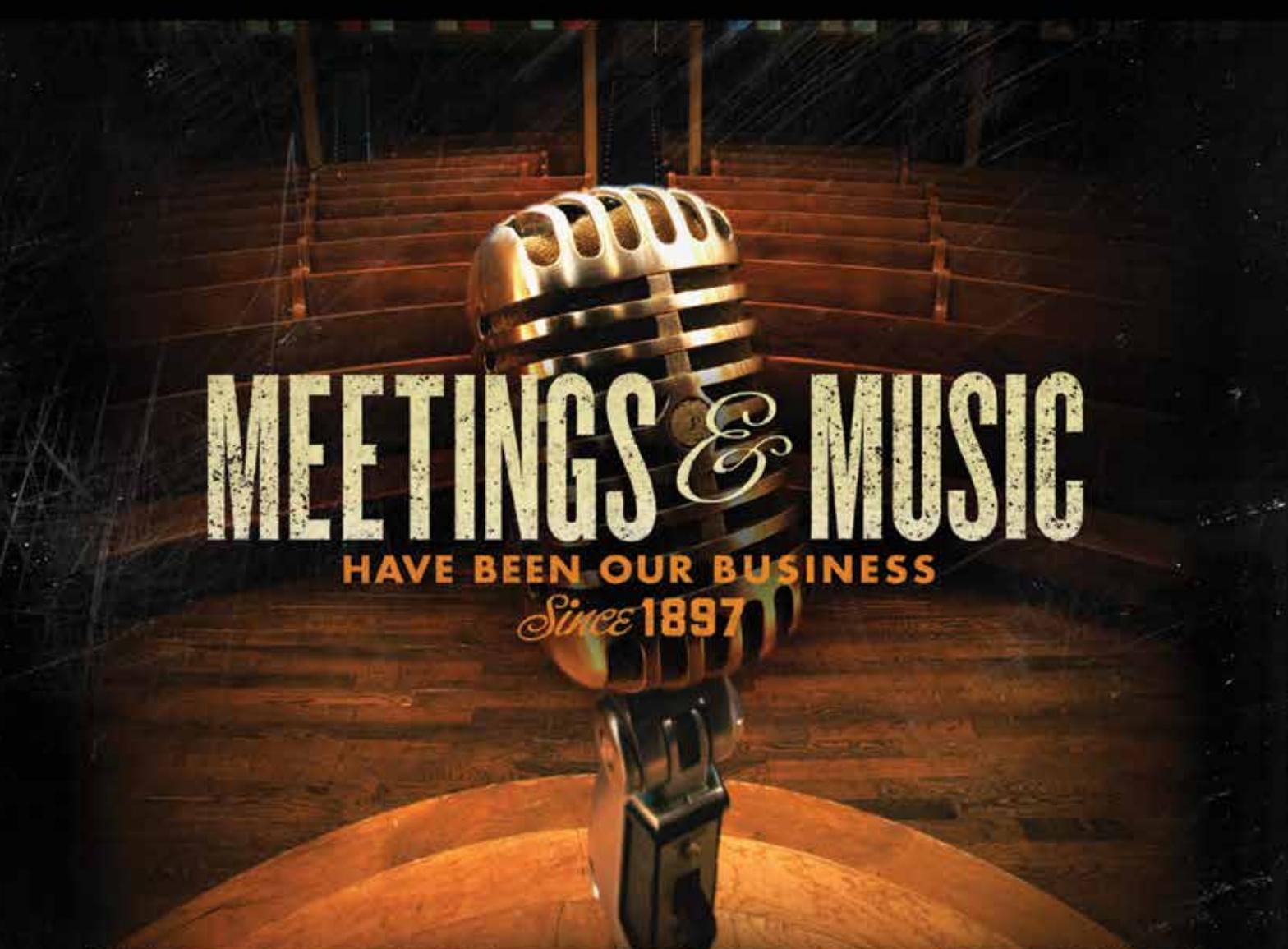
"When I started here six years ago, my role was that of a traditional events coordinator, someone whose role was to make reservations and hold meeting space," she says. "Back then, everything else kind of fell to other departments. But over the last few years, that has changed significantly. Now people come to me and ask me what I think they should do or what would work best. And part of that is that if you have a CMP and a CMM, people know that you're someone who definitely knows what they're talking about."



No matter which ASAE events meeting planners chose to attend, there is something for everyone. From the ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition to the Great Ideas Conference and every event in between, attendees have several options for creative learning and imaginative thinking.

Credit: ASAE

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# Attractive & Affordable

## How SMERF Planners Take On the **Double A** Site Selection Challenge

By Patrick Simms

**A** slew of meeting and event types are now captured by the SMERF acronym, not only the social, military, educational, religious and fraternal, but also special interest, sporting, multicultural, talent competitions and more. Some of these segments are more prominent in the meetings and events industry than others. Religious meetings, for example, have been enjoying increased attendance overall in the past two years, and the Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA) has a strong presence at IMEX America, partnering with the show for the third year in a row this October. But no matter how high profile a SMERF segment becomes, its planners tend to face a certain balancing act in designing an event that is both attractive and affordable to members. As is well known, SMERF delegates are typically on tighter budgets than

corporate attendees or the well-to-do members of some professional associations.

“For my international convention, cost per room night would be the No. 1 criterion,” affirms Keith Reed, director, member and field relations, for Suitland, Maryland-based Air Force Sergeants Association. Many of the AFSA’s members are retired and on a fixed budget. “So they would love to be in Washington, DC, or Los Angeles, but when you’re looking at \$250 per room night (for a quality hotel), there is no way I can justify that cost. They’re actually paying out of pocket.”

Yet at the same time, not just any second- or third-tier city, or budget property within such cities, will be a good draw or have the resources necessary to host the meeting. Jacksonville, Florida, site of the AFSA’s 2014 Professional Airmen’s Conference, August 16–20, is not only affordable, but has what Reed calls “flair.”

“Give me something for attendees to do,” he says. “So after a long day of meetings and discussions, they can go out in the local economy and get good meals, or have a drink if they so choose. They can go out and have a safe social gathering.

“What makes Jacksonville such a good fit for my group is that you have the Landing (a shopping, dining and museum complex along St. Johns River) and St. Johns Town Center, which is a stone’s throw from the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront,” where the conference’s 600-plus attendees are meeting.

Reed also has found that San Antonio, Texas, offers a similar combination of affordability and entertainment resources, with its River Walk cafés. An added benefit Reed has noted is that venues in both Jacksonville and San Antonio display a certain pride



Chaz Boston Baden  
Chair  
Animé Los Angeles  
Los Angeles, CA

***“What we try to impress on the hotel is that we know they’re trying to make money, and we’re not trying to nickel and dime them. But our people are not on expense accounts, they’re saving up their money.”***



Virginia Pinto  
Assistant Director, Special Events  
University of Maryland  
Alumni Relations  
College Park, MD

***“We use the RFP process to go through all the different venues in the area and find those that are the best value for us while also being somewhat upscale.”***

in hosting military groups, “perhaps due to the military presence that’s already there. In my opinion they do a good job of recognizing what the military means to the nation.”

### **FLEXIBILITY FACTOR**

If a site selection is significantly constrained by rate requirements, a planner is traditionally advised to try to be flexible on dates and/or space. But those needs also can be rather entrenched for some SMERF groups, making site selection even more challenging. At press time, Chaz Boston Baden, chair of Animé Los Angeles, a project of the Institute for Specialized Literature, was involved in site selection for the convention’s 2016 installment, with potential California cities including Ontario, Long Beach, Anaheim and Los Angeles. “Certainly we would have more flexibility if we could shift our dates, but we want to keep the event in January because we have a niche as the first event of the year,” says Baden. “Also, we’ve grown so large (attendance is currently at 4,000-5,000) that the number of properties that can accommodate us gets fewer and fewer. If I was running a 400-person convention, there are three hotels in every town I could pick.”

Some concessions might be made, such as no longer holding the entire convention under one roof. “But we must have a lot of breakout rooms because we have five to six tracks of live programs, panel discussions and talks, plus we have a martial arts demo room, hospitality suite and a parents’ lounge,” Baden explains. “We also need a couple of big rooms for our main stage and dealers’ hall, and a room or two where we can show video programs and offer computer games. And we rent AV equipment from a preferred vendor, so it’s important that the venue not have a problem with us bringing in our own equipment.”

### **COST-CONSCIOUS ATTENDEES**

Compounded with those logistical requirements, Animé Los Angeles is limited on the revenue it can promise hotels, given that attendees are mostly ages 15–25. “In the process of trying to negotiate a site for 2016, we had one offer from a property that is just a

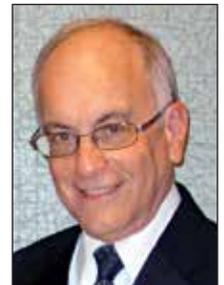
lovely hotel with acres and acres of function space; however, they wanted \$40,000 of additional revenue above the F&B and guest room expenses we were prepared to commit to,” Baden relates. “In addition, our members are very cost conscious, and the property wanted our room rate at \$150 plus tax for the first year, and to go up after that. Now, for people who are going to trade shows on an expense account, (that rate) is no big deal. But people (in the Animé space) can choose to go to a different convention that has room rates of \$110 a night, and they don’t have to come to our convention. What we try to impress on the hotel is that we know they’re trying to make money, and we’re not trying to nickel and dime them. But our people are not on expense accounts, they’re saving up their money.”

### **SHOPPING AROUND**

So, how does Animé Los Angeles manage to source facilities that fit its stringent date, rate and space requirements? “It’s a matter of shopping around,” Baden says.

For many SMERF groups, there can be no getting around a good deal of legwork in that area. Virginia Pinto, assistant director, special events, University of Maryland Alumni Relations, utilizes plenty of resources, from industry magazines to alumni connections to Cvent, to find venues for the organization’s numerous off-campus social and educational events for alumni. Spaces include hotel ballrooms, stadiums, museums, art galleries, restaurants and the-

***“Some of the higher-end meeting facilities would work for a convention but not necessarily for a leadership academy because they are priced too high for a weekend activity.”***



Sidney Dunn  
Executive Director  
Fraternity Executives Association  
Carmel, IN

aters. She notes that University of Maryland Alumni Association events sometimes cannot deliver the headcount and revenue that a venue expects. “I think certain venues are definitely looking for a larger number of peak night rooms, larger groups than we tend to work with,” she observes. “But I think a lot of other ones realize that smaller groups are actually making up a majority of their business. We find many venues that are great to work with. So I don’t think being a nonprofit or alumni group is in general a problem.”

In addition, she sometimes manages to keep pricing affordable by using the university’s connections to venues or partnering with an alumni-owned business that’s related to a rental venue. When



Credit: Draco Noir Photography

The Face & Body Art International Convention in Fort Lauderdale attracted an international attendance of 450 professionals and enthusiasts.

such recourses aren't available, it simply comes down to an intensive site search: "We use the RFP process to go through all the different venues in the area and find those that are the best value for us while also being somewhat upscale." Hotels utilized, for example, are generally three to four stars, Pinto adds.

## MARKET CONDITIONS

Meeting industry market conditions sometimes come to the aid of SMERF groups, making their site search and negotiation process easier. While corporate meetings took a dive during the recession, some SMERF segments remained resilient, including fraternal meetings. Sidney Dunn, executive director of Carmel, Indiana-based Fraternity Executives Association (FEA), notes that there has been "very little downturn in attendance at fraternity and sorority meetings, even during the recession." As a result, "we found that properties that wouldn't normally consider fraternity and sorority meetings were looking at them because the hotels had availability. So, for example, in Las Vegas we were being approached by hotels such as Bellagio and Venetian with rates that compared with some of the lesser-priced properties in Las Vegas that typically had hosted fraternity conventions." Predictably, the economic recovery has caused those opportunities to vanish, Dunn relates.

As executive director for the FEA, a professional group that overarches fraternities and sororities, Dunn has a good perspective on that segment's meeting patterns. "They meet frequently: an annual business session, generally once a year for leadership education, board meetings, alumni events and regional meetings, sometimes at campus facilities. When I was a fraternity executive, I would plan as many as 14 meetings a year," he says. In some cases, the frequency of events can be used as negotiating leverage during a site search; that is, the right deal will encourage the group to regularly use the property.

Of course, a given property may not be suitable for all of the various fraternity meetings. "Some of the higher-end meeting facilities would work for a convention but not necessarily for a leadership academy because they are priced too high for a weekend activity. For example, we just left the Waldorf Astoria Naples (where FEA's 2014 Annual Conference was held in July). That hotel would be great for a board meeting, a foundation meeting, an alumni event or a national convention. But it would not be as good a place for a regional meeting in February because it's in season." Generally, fraternities and sororities meet in the summertime, and due to the need for lower rates, will opt for "Southern tier properties and the warmer cities in Arizona, Texas, New Orleans and Florida, where summer business is generally slower," Dunn explains. "They aren't able to meet as much in the Northeast and upper Midwest cities because summertime there is popular for tourists," and hence room rates rise.

## UNUSUAL GROUPS, UNUSUAL CHALLENGES

Such site limitations of fraternal meetings are generally well known, as they are one of the traditional SMERF groups. But the category has become quite a catch-all, and some of the more unusual groups can face site-search hurdles due to their very nature. One example is the Face & Body Art International Annual Convention (FABAIC), a trade show and educational show that falls in the "special interest" category. The event draws more than 450 professionals and enthusiasts who do face and body painting, air brushing, glitter tattoos and related kinds of art. Participants from the United Kingdom, Germany, South and Central America, Japan and elsewhere around the world fly into the Bonaventure Hotel & Spa in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Claudia Banks, FABAIC Board Member and co-organizer of the convention, notes that the Bonaventure has been an ideal site for three years. FABAIC's artistic attendees enjoy its lush outdoor gathering spaces and aLaya Spa. As far as meeting rooms, "we look for good lighting that can be projected in the rooms because when the instructors teach classes, we have cameras to project what they're doing. And the hotel has been great about providing good lighting for us."

But there were some bumps along the way to that site choice, according to Banks. Body-painting participants, while not nude, are scantily clad, and this was an issue with some hoteliers. "When we were looking to move from Orlando, our biggest challenge was to find a hotel that was open enough to understand that this is not a pornographic convention, it's an art convention," Banks says. "We were turned down by several hotels, and if you get a salesperson at any of these properties who's not so receptive to that kind of art, then automatically they're going to see it as taboo. But that happened about five years ago; ever since then we've been courted by hotels who actually had said 'no' before, because face and body art has become so much more mainstream. We have kids in our classes, and art is in the eye of the beholder as they say. The first year we were at the Bonaventure, when it was still a Hyatt, they were a little bit (hesitant), but then they saw how our people behave and what the art means to them. And they were happy to have us back." FABAIC can also market itself as a significant piece of business to hotels, as the hundreds of attendees stay a minimum of five nights.

Although body painting is an artistic event, the participants are nonetheless quite visually impactful, and Banks would prefer not to draw a crowd in a hotel. Thus, one of FABAIC's site criteria is that the group's function rooms be removed from guest

***"When we were looking to move from Orlando, our biggest challenge was to find a hotel that was open enough to understand that this is not a pornographic convention, it's an art convention."***



Claudia Banks  
Board Member  
Face & Body Art  
International Convention  
Weston, FL

traffic. "I don't want the meeting rooms to be exactly where you walk in, and that's what we liked about the Doubletree (by Hilton Universal Orlando). Their convention space is completely at the other end of the hotel lobby, as it is with the Bonaventure." With 80,000 sf of meeting space, the Bonaventure had little trouble keeping FABAIC well separated from another SMERF group that shared a day with the convention last year. "We thought it was going to be a disaster because, believe it or not, it was a group of rabbis," Banks recounts. "But it went fine." AC&F

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# Planning Events Around the Globe

By Karen Brost

If there's one thing that stays constant about planning meetings around the world, it's the fact that things change. Just ask Phelps R. Hope, CMP, senior vice president, meetings and expositions for Kellen Meetings, Atlanta, Georgia, who was recently named PCMA's Global Meetings Executive of the Year. "There are some staples that change all the time," he says, noting geopolitics, currency, taxes, visa requirements, customs and shipping as examples. "These are always moving targets. Because you did a program in Brazil 10 years ago or five years ago, doesn't mean the same stipulations are in play.

"Every country on the planet is constantly changing," he continues. "You can't assume — and that's the biggest thing — because I do it this way at home, it's going to be that way overseas. Or if I've done it at the same place overseas, it will be the same way again. Or if I did it this way in Thailand, therefore in Malaysia it should be the same. You've got to go overseas with your meeting planning knowledge, believing that you are a novice. You have to ask questions at the most basic level. You can't assume ANYTHING."

Martin Sirk, CEO of the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA) based in Amsterdam, reported on the trends he's seeing develop in regard to U.S. associations hosting international meetings. "What I've noticed is that 'international' is on more and more strategic agendas — this has been steadily growing over the last decade. It's not a new phenomenon. What's also clear is that U.S. and European-based associations are compet-

## Do Your Homework and Create a Passport to Success

ing hard to gain prominence in other regions, and especially in markets such as China and the rest of Asia-Pacific and in Latin America. Whichever associations have the easiest-to-access portals and the most comprehensive, up-to-date knowledge and expertise in their fields are likely to become global leaders. Being a regional powerhouse doesn't automatically give the same regional monopoly of influence that it used to — choice and competition have become global."

When asked what some of the advantages are of an association holding its annual meeting outside of the U.S., he replies, "It depends entirely on the business objectives of the association and its members and stakeholders. Where those objectives include engagement with international colleagues and markets (e.g., to build membership, sell products and services, facilitate partnerships, promote accreditations or qualifications, or simply to advance a humanitarian mission), the question then is whether it's a more effective strategy to bring those international contacts to meetings in the U.S., or to organize meetings (not necessarily the annual event) outside the borders. Many associations are doing both. Naturally, any international meetings strategy has to be aligned with a range of other international initiatives, perhaps including representation in key markets, growth of chapters, language versions of websites or print collateral, etc. The meeting itself should always be seen as a means of achieving the objectives, not as an end in itself."

### CHOOSING THE DESTINATION

"One of the most strategic things meeting planners can do with an international meeting is to choose a destination that matches the expertise area and industry of their client or company," says Laura d'Elsa, regional director, USA/Canada of the German Convention Bureau. "In Germany, we work closely with planners through our convention bureaus and local economic development organizations to bring even more value to meeting delegate experiences.

"Do your homework and ask the in-country resources if they can recommend expert speakers, site visits, unique locations, etc., that will bring fresh insights to your audience," she advises planners. "For example, if you are doing an automotive industry event in Germany, Stuttgart could be a great choice with the Mercedes and Porsche HQs and museums. For aerospace, Cologne offers



Phelps R. Hope, CMP  
Senior Vice President, Meetings  
and Expositions  
Kellen Meetings  
Atlanta, GA

***"Every country on the planet is constantly changing. You've got to go overseas... believing that you are a novice. You have to ask questions at the most basic level. You can't assume ANYTHING."***



Credit: CIBTM

Touching the globe at last year's CIBTM are (l to r) Jacqui Timmins, Asia exhibition director of Reed Travel Exhibition Group; Song Yu, vice chairman of Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development; Lu Yong, chairman of Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development; Cheng Hong, vice mayor of Beijing Municipal Government; Madam Cheng Hong, vice mayor of Beijing Municipal Government; Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, minister of tourism, South Africa; Craig Moyes, portfolio director, Reed Travel Exhibitions Leisure Portfolio; David Dubois, CEO of IAEE; and Paul Van Deventer, president and CEO of MPI.

zero gravity chamber experiences. Leipzig is a hub for medical research, and so on.”

Heidi C. Borter, CMP, is senior event planner for Pennsylvania-based SAE International, an organization with a membership of more than 135,000 engineers and technical experts in the aerospace, automotive and commercial vehicle industries. SAE conducts approximately 30–40 meetings annually with about 30 percent of them held in international destinations such as Europe, Canada, India and China, and the events attract anywhere from 25 to 2,000 attendees.

SAE has achieved success by meeting in cities that are closely aligned with the industries its members belong to. “We’ve held numerous meetings in Stuttgart, Germany, because of the amount of automotive companies and potential attendees in that area,” she explains. “It’s worked really well for us, and the German and Stuttgart CVBs have been incredibly supportive and helpful. We also held the SAE 2011 AeroTech Congress in Toulouse, France, because Airbus is based there, and they were our host company. In 2013, AeroTech was based in Montreal because Bombardier was our host company. Having these key sponsorships and the support of their local CVBs was critical in deciding to locate the event in these cities. The corporate support could be either financial or content-related, and the CVB support could be either financial or assistance finding potential speakers or exhibitors.”

***“We’ve held numerous meetings in Stuttgart, Germany, because of the amount of automotive companies and potential attendees in that area. It’s worked really well for us, and the...CVBs have been incredibly supportive and helpful.”***



Heidi C. Borter, CMP  
Senior Event Planner  
SAE International  
Warrendale, PA

Patricia Silvio is global marketing manager for Pacific World, a global DMC, which operates in 26 countries and also has formed a strategic alliance with Access Destination Services in the U.S. She sees sponsorship opportunities as an upcoming trend. “There are some tourism authorities and convention bureaus offering very attractive sponsoring packages to associations in order to attract important congresses, which is a great opportunity if the destination offers good accessibility, appropriate infrastructure, etc.”

In terms of choosing a destination, Silvio says, “It is always a little bit easier to increase the delegates’ attendance when choosing



A general session at the Third DIA (Drug Information Association) China Annual Meeting held in Beijing, China.

Credit: Kellen Meetings

a known destination, and the higher the number of delegates, the more likely it is to attract more sponsors who would like to be part of the congress.” That being said, she noted that emerging markets are more and more in demand, but that planners who are working on large-scale conferences need to carefully evaluate these destinations to ensure that they will work logistically in terms of hotel and venue capacity, transportation and other factors. These emerging markets include Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, South Africa, Brazil, Russia, India and China.

## GETTING STARTED

When planning an international meeting, Hope recommends starting with the big picture by doing some basic research about what’s going on in the country. He says a good place to start is to



Patricia Silvio  
Global Marketing Manager  
Pacific World  
London, UK

*“There are some tourism authorities and convention bureaus offering very attractive sponsoring packages to associations in order to attract important congresses, which is a great opportunity.”*

check news sources and the U.S. State Department website. “You can go to *state.gov* and put in the country,” he notes. “That’s where travel advisories are, and the State Department gives an overview assessment of that particular country.”

The next step, he says, is to find peers who have planned meetings in the same location, whether they’re members of an organization such as PCMA, MPI or IAEE or whether they’re found through another resource like a LinkedIn chat group. “You need to interview people that have got the experience, that have done it.”

He gave an example of one pitfall planners often overlook, the matter of an exit fee. “In other words, you’re finished with your convention, your attendees are leaving the country, but they have to pay \$25 or \$50 to get out. You’ve used up all your money and they take cash only. Those are the little traps you don’t think about.”

Hope is a big believer in leveraging local resources. But, he cautions, “Don’t take the first one’s advice carte blanche. It might be a DMC, it might be an audio-visual company, it might be a hotel company, a tourism organization or a CVB, but it’s local wherever you’re going. If you get story ‘A’ at DMC number one, then go to DMC number two and ask the same questions and see if you get the same answers. You can’t assume that just because one person told you something, that’s the way it is.”

## LEARNING ABOUT LANGUAGE

Naturally, meeting in a foreign destination may involve overcoming some language barriers, but U.S. planners may be surprised to learn that they may even encounter these barriers when meeting in an English-speaking country. “Jump around the English-speaking countries and see what you run into,” Hope says, adding that America, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland and South Africa are all English-speaking countries, but they’re not the same. “It’s the use of the language,” he notes. He gave the simple example of requesting a podium. In America, that would be a lectern, but in some other English-speaking countries, a podium is a dais, or a stage. “We may have the same language, but are we speaking the same jargon?”

## CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

It also can be extremely helpful for planners to learn as much as they can about cultural differences and traditions in the country they’re visiting. “If you go to India, and you’re going to have a high percentage of Indians attending your conference, well then you better have a lot of vegetarian food,” Hope explains as an example of cultural differences.

He also shared a story about a meeting he planned in China. The room was all set up when a representative of the convention

center came in with a huge floral arrangement and placed it on top of the lectern. Hope knew it would block the speaker's face, so he placed the arrangement on the floor in front of the lectern. The man from the convention center became very irate and placed it back on top, and the two men went back and forth. "It looked like a comedy routine!" Hope laughs. He explained that his convention services manager finally pulled him aside and informed him that placing flowers on top of a lectern is a sign of respect, whereas placing them on the floor shows disrespect and is considered back luck. Oops. "The message to all of that is you have to have your eyes and ears open and you have to be flexible because you're going to run into things you just wouldn't think to ask."

## CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

The process of negotiating a contract can also vary widely overseas. "America is a very litigious society," Hope describes, "so there are a lot of checks and balances in the contract template that just don't exist overseas." He says it's common for overseas vendors to require payment up front. He explains, "If you're doing a program in Singapore or Kenya or in London, are they going to come to Los Angeles to chase down your money? No. A legal contract is to fight a battle afterwards. They don't want to fight a battle. They just want your money. It's just a negotiation of how much money you pay ahead of time versus on the back end. I always hold something back to get a little bit of leverage in negotiation."

Hope says there are also different nuances in foreign contracts. "They won't deal with attrition. You want 200 rooms, you pay for 200 rooms. (The attitude is) if you don't want 200, tell me how many you want."

"Revenue centers look a little bit different than revenue centers for U.S. hotels," he continues. "European hotels have a high emphasis on meeting room rental and a high emphasis on DDR (Daily Delegate Rate), your packaged food and beverage and audio-visual rates. In most cases, the DDR is a good convenience to have. (However), a half-day rate is usually a big-time rip-off because they usually put too much in there."

What about Internet service? "You go to Asia and a lot of the

*"Whichever associations have the easiest-to-access portals and the most comprehensive, up-to-date knowledge and expertise in their fields are likely to become global leaders. ...Choice and competition have become global!"*



Martin Sirk  
CEO, ICCA  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

hotels and the convention centers throw in the Internet for free because that's part of the facility rental. That's part of the culture in Asia. They're a very wireless/cellphone kind of community. In Europe, the majority of hotels are providing complimentary wireless in the lobby and the public areas. That's because they want you to sit in the lobby and order a beer or sit in the lobby and order a cheeseburger. (The attitude is) if you're going to use the Internet in your guest room, it's usually because you're doing some work, and if you're doing some work, you should pay for it. But you can negotiate it into your room rate."

## TRENDS IN OUTSOURCING

In July, ICCA conducted a hybrid workshop on the Future for Association Outsourcing, which involved pre-workshop online interviews and surveys, live interaction with more than 300 online participants in 43 countries and input from 150 members onsite. A majority of the associations surveyed had recently brought back in-house some outsourced services, essentially to take closer control of areas that are seen as "mission critical." However, both suppliers and associations agree that there will be significantly more outsourcing over the coming five years, and that competition between companies offering outsourcing will increase.

"From what we've seen in an ever more complex and competitive business environment," Sirk explains, "international associations are looking for any solutions that will either help to control

## A New Resource for Planners

Planners who attend EIBTM, the Global Meetings & Events Expo this November in Barcelona, Spain, will be happy to know that the organization recently launched a new initiative called "My Association/My Club." Based on the results of a focus group held in London in May, the new initiative will help association planners make the most of their time at EIBTM. "Association meeting planners have very specific needs, and this new offer

includes flexibility as its core. From freedom to explore the show floor and discover new suppliers, building an education program of their choice and having the time to meet with members of their community, it's all about creating their own personalized program," says Graeme Barnett, EIBTM senior exhibition director for Reed Travel Exhibitions.

One of the components of the new program is My Meetings, My Choice, a per-

sonalized diary of pre-scheduled appointments of the hosted buyer's choice from a selection of more than 3,000 international exhibitors. Another is My Networking, which offers an opportunity to connect with contacts and meet other international association peers at exclusive networking events. Complete details about the "My Association/My Club" initiative are available at [www.eibtm.com/myclub](http://www.eibtm.com/myclub).

— KB

# Dubai Association Centre Helps North American Associations Set Up International Hubs

The Dubai Association Centre (DAC) concluded its successful participation in the ASAE 2014 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Nashville, and 200 mainly North American associations expressed interest in DAC and in knowing more about Dubai as a hub for international associations.

DAC, a joint initiative of Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) and Dubai World Trade Centre (DTWC), won the conference's award for best island booth, which attracted around 1,000 visitors.

DAC allows a formal environment where international non-profit, professional as-

sociations and trade bodies can form a membership-based community or open a regional representative office to conduct business in the UAE and beyond.

For associations, the advantages of setting up in Dubai go beyond the obvious attractions of a well-developed city at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. DAC provides practical support, in the form of serviced office accommodations in Sheikh Rashid Tower and access to the networking facilities of the World Trade Club, both located at Dubai World Trade Centre, the region's leading events and exhibition venue. The centre also provides assistance in obtaining visas for staff, establishing local bank accounts, and developing activities and membership in Dubai and the wider Middle East region.

Hassan Al Hashemi, member of the executive committee of DAC and vice president of international relations, Dubai Chamber, said, "DAC's presence at the ASAE Annual Meeting was very successful in terms of promoting our services to North American associations. Worldwide, associations are

major generators of conferences and exhibitions, with about 90 percent of these events organized by associations. As DAC attracts more international associations we will see additional benefits across Dubai's MICE sector.

Said Ahmed Al Khaja, senior vice president, Dubai World Trade Centre, "We continue to see buoyant interest from the North American market, which is further expanding with increasing airlift, enhanced connectivity and Dubai's established reputation as a gateway to the burgeoning Africa, South Asian and wider Middle East. This is evidenced with us welcoming more than 42,000 U.S. trade visitors to DWTC in 2013, across 115 key events. Certainly, DAC will expand and deepen Dubai's established reputation to become a base for decision-makers in an industry that is expanding rapidly both globally and within the region."

As a strategic event partner, DAC is now engaged with ASAE for the next three years and will be exhibiting next year at ASAE's Annual Meeting & Exposition in Detroit.

[www.dubaichamber.com/dac](http://www.dubaichamber.com/dac)



The Dubai World Trade Centre Tower at night (above) and the Dubai World Trade Centre Convention Gate.

Credit: Dubai World Trade Centre



costs or will improve quality standards or enable them to utilize new technology. A key consideration is whether outsourcing has the potential to damage the critical relationships with members. Many outsourcing companies seem to concentrate entirely on the bottom-line impact, without realizing that associations are primarily concerned with the long-term engagement of their membership, which is mission critical to their survival."

## CHANNELING YOUR INNER MACGYVER

In the end, flexibility and resourcefulness are two of the most important skills needed to plan an international meeting. "Eighty

percent of meeting planning anywhere in the world is the same," Hope says. "People have to sleep, they have to eat, they have to be able to see, they have to be able to hear, they've got to feel comfortable, they've got to feel safe. Those are the basics that you cover for anybody at anytime, anywhere. But it's the nuances above that where your skill set comes in. Are you paying attention? Are you being inquisitive? Are you using the resources around you? Because I guarantee you when you get there, it's going to happen, whatever it is. You have to have a certain element of MacGyver in you because you just don't know what you're going to have to do, and you can only use what you've got."

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- Dedicated technical services and conference management team for all your meeting and convention needs
- More rewards and options with Sands Rewards Meetings – our dedicated planner loyalty programme

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## The Best of the Best



Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau



Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau



MGM Grand Hotel & Casino



New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau

The deserving winners of the 2014 Distinctive Achievement Awards presented by *Association Conventions & Facilities* magazine have met or exceeded the high standards that association meeting planners demand today. Many of the more than 20,500 meeting professionals who read *Association Conventions & Facilities* seized this golden opportunity to cast their ballot for the hotels, resorts, and convention and visitors bureaus that successfully accommodated their association meetings during the past year.

The Distinctive Achievement Award winners were judged on the following criteria:

### CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS

- Superior Service and Support
- Top-Notch Assistance With Promotion, Accommodations and Site Inspections
- High Level of Assistance to Identify and Liaison With Suppliers, Vendors, Facilities, Venues and Local Government
- Outstanding Communication and First-Rate Website

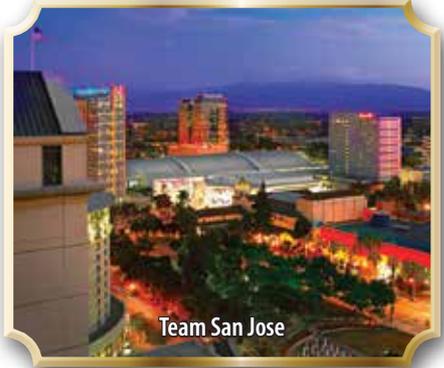
### HOTELS AND RESORTS

- Superior Service Standards
- Excellent Accommodations and Meeting Facilities
- Reasonable Room Rates and Labor Costs
- Advanced Technological Capabilities and First-Rate Website
- Environmentally Friendly Policies
- Paramount Safety and Security

You'll find profiles of several of the best of the best on the following pages. AC&F



South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa



Team San Jose



The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino



Wynn Las Vegas

# 2014 DISTINCTIVE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

## CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS

### Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau

Albuquerque, NM

### Anaheim/Orange County Visitor & Convention Bureau

Anaheim, CA

### Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau

Atlanta, GA

### Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau

Austin, TX

### Destination DC

Washington, DC

### Discover Palm Beach County

West Palm Beach, FL

### Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

Miami, FL

### Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

Las Vegas, NV

### Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau

Long Beach, CA

### Meet Puerto Rico

San Juan, PR

### Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau

Memphis, TN

### Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp.

Nashville, TN

### New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau

New Orleans, LA

### Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau

Oklahoma City, OK

### Positively Cleveland

Cleveland, OH

### San Diego Tourism Authority

San Diego, CA

### San Francisco Travel Association

San Francisco, CA

### Team San Jose

San Jose, CA

### Visit Anchorage

Anchorage, AK

### Visit Baltimore

Baltimore, MD

### VISIT DENVER

Denver, CO

### Visit Jacksonville

Jacksonville, FL

### Visit Orlando

Orlando, FL

### VisitPhoenix

Phoenix, AZ

### Visit Salt Lake

Salt Lake City, UT

### Visit Savannah

Savannah, GA

## CONVENTION CENTERS

### Colorado Convention Center

Denver, CO

### Georgia World Congress Center

Atlanta, GA

### Las Vegas Convention Center

Las Vegas, NV

### Music City Center

Nashville, TN

### Orange County Convention Center

Orlando, FL

### Phoenix Convention Center

Phoenix, AZ

### Walter E. Washington Convention Center

Washington, DC

## HOTELS AND RESORTS

### ARIA Resort & Casino

Las Vegas, NV

### Diplomat Resort & Spa

Hollywood, FL

### Foxwoods Resort Casino

Mashantucket, CT

### Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center

National Harbor, MD

### Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center

Nashville, TN

### Hyatt Regency Orlando

Orlando, FL

### JW Marriott Indianapolis

Indianapolis, IN

### Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino

Las Vegas, NV

### MGM Grand Hotel & Casino (Las Vegas)

Las Vegas, NV

### Mohegan Sun

Uncasville, CT

### New York Hilton-Midtown

New York, NY

### Omni Dallas Hotel

Dallas, TX

### Rosen Centre Hotel

Orlando, FL

### Rosen Plaza Hotel

Orlando, FL

### Rosen Shingle Creek

Orlando, FL

### Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel

New York, NY

### South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa

Las Vegas, NV

### The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino

Las Vegas, NV

### Wynn Las Vegas

Las Vegas, NV



## Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

701 Brickell Avenue, Miami, FL 33131

305-539-3071 or 800-933-8448 x 3071 • Convention/Group Sales: [info@miamimeetings.com](mailto:info@miamimeetings.com)  
[www.MiamiMeetings.com](http://www.MiamiMeetings.com)

**M**iami is the place to hold your event if you want to attract the most attendees, and have them rave about it after they return home.

Today, the city's sprawling metropolitan area, which includes distinctive enclaves such as Downtown Miami, the Brickell financial district, Coconut Grove, Coral Gables and Miami Beach, combines ultra-modern urban chic with a laidback, old-school resort charm.

### ATTRACTIONS

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, designed by global superstar architect Cesar Peli, hosts a world-class season of theatre, symphony concerts and performances by Miami City Ballet. The New World Center, designed by legendary architect Frank Gehry and home base of the world-renowned New World Symphony headed by maestro Michael Tilson Thomas, features SoundScape Park, where visitors can watch performances or films projected onto a 7,000-sf wall.

A major new attraction, Museum Park, includes the new Pérez Art Museum Miami and the Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science, a 250,000-sf facility that will open next year.

### MEETING INFRASTRUCTURE

While Miami boasts cultural sizzle aplenty, it's the city's vast and diverse meeting infrastructure that gets the attention of planners.

The Greater Miami area now has nearly 50,000 hotel rooms, from unique and charming boutique hotels to major-brand convention properties.

One thing that further contributes to Miami's appeal is that virtually all of its hotels offer outdoor function spaces that showcase spectacular views of Biscayne Bay from downtown, or the Atlantic Ocean from Miami Beach. And Miami's subtropical climate means warm weather that allows for comfortable outdoor events throughout the year.

The ability to exploit local color includes rooftop pool decks, lushly landscaped tropical patios and gardens, expansive lawns overlooking world-renowned golf courses, and palm-lined courtyards and terraces with breathtaking views.

Meanwhile, Miami offers world-class convention and conference facilities. For decades, the Miami Beach Convention Center has been one of the most popular facilities in the world. Located at the heart of the Art Deco Historic District, the complex is within easy walking distance of all of South Beach's best known restaurants, bars and nightclubs. The convention center will soon begin a \$500 million renovation and expansion project.

Another facility popular for smaller conventions and conferences is the Miami Convention & Conference Center, located between Downtown Miami and the edge of the Brickell financial district. It's a foundational element of the James L. Knight International Center/Hyatt Regency complex and features a 444-seat auditorium, a 117-seat tiered acoustically balanced lecture hall and 20 meeting rooms.

Imagine the meeting your attendees will want to come to. It's so Miami.

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### CITYWIDE FACTS & FEATURES

**Guest Rooms:** 48,000

**Meeting Space:** More than 500,000 sf

### CONVENTION CENTER FYI

Looking for the ideal meeting destination? It's So Miami.

The Miami Beach Convention Center, located in the heart of South Beach, boasts more than 1 million sf of flexible space, including more than 500,000 gross sf of exhibit space and more than 150,000 sf of versatile meeting and prefunction space.



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So someone tried to tell you why meeting in Miami's so inspiring, so exciting and so productive. Know this. No tweet, snapshot or posting will ever be enough. You so have to meet here to get it. 305-539-3071 | [MiamiMeetings.com](http://MiamiMeetings.com)

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## Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau

301 E. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 1900, Long Beach, CA 90802

Iris Himert, Executive Vice President • [irish@longbeachcvb.org](mailto:irish@longbeachcvb.org)  
562-495-8333 • Fax: 562-436-8606 • [www.VisitLongBeach.com](http://www.VisitLongBeach.com)

**L**ong Beach has fast become an innovative leader in creating “a new essence of meeting style” with its \$40 million convention center renovation to create an open, comfortable environment where people can easily connect and collaborate.

A campus has been created around downtown Long Beach that encourages the development and sharing of ideas. This campus includes newly renovated hotels, which are just steps from the convention center and the surrounding downtown waterfront entertainment district, which includes shopping venues, entertainment, nightlife and more than 100 quality restaurants, many with spectacular oceanfront views.



### CITYWIDE FACTS & FEATURES

**Guest Rooms:** 4,688

**Hotels/Resorts:** 24

**Meeting Space:**

Hotel: 219,000+ sf

Offsite: 500,000+ sf

### CONVENTION CENTER FYI

Located in the center of the downtown waterfront with sweeping harbor views, the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center is designed to give guests a stylish and welcoming social experience offering flexible event choices.

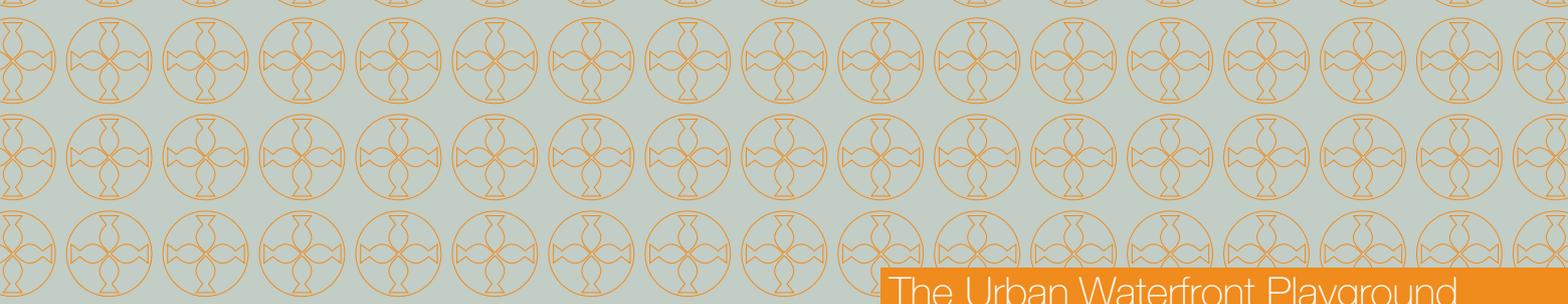
### MEETING FACILITIES

The Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center offers more than 400,000 sf of modern, versatile meeting and exhibit space with new wiring for the latest technology as well as wireless capability. The campus boasts two recently renovated VIP lounges, a full-service concierge/restaurant reservation desk, hospitality catering and an on-site audio-visual supplier with free Wi-Fi. With 34 meeting rooms and a Grand Ballroom, three dynamic Exhibition Halls, Long Beach Arena, Center Theater and the Terrace Theater, the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center is ideal for all types of special events, conventions and trade shows.

As part of the \$40 million renovation, upgrades at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center now offer new and versatile special event venues such as Bogart & Co. plus attractive outdoor plazas and patios — highlighting the best in lounge and innovative event space. Our newly revamped Pacific Gallery includes chic pod-style seating with customized lighting. Now planners can match their event to their imagination.

Additionally, the new Pacific Ballroom at the Long Beach Arena is one of the country's premier ballroom venues, revolutionizing the platform design for event spaces. The ballroom's 46,000 sf of customizable event space is complete with a floating tension grid and moveable, floor-to-ceiling curtain walls to create the right environment for your group. The adaptable, electronic walls can accommodate groups of all types, ranging from an intimate gathering to a grandly lavish 5,500-person reception. The Pacific Ballroom at the Long Beach Arena offers you substantial cost savings, thanks to its all-inclusive, \$1.6 million state-of-the-art lighting, sound and video system — all controlled with a simple touch on an iPad.

Long Beach is the center of Southern California, with all of the attractions in Los Angeles and Orange County just minutes from our downtown waterfront. In addition, Long Beach has world-class attractions of its own: The Queen Mary and the Aquarium of the Pacific, The Pike At Rainbow Harbor, Shoreline Village, plus four distinctive museums and two historic Ranchos. Plus, getting to Long Beach is a breeze with three major airports within 30 minutes of the city, including the newly renovated Long Beach Airport. 



The Urban Waterfront Playground

# Experience Unconventional

Meet the City that doesn't do Ordinary. Chic. Casual. Modern. Retro. Hot, sunny days. Bright, electric nights. It's the unmistakable contrasts and sweet contradictions that make Long Beach a city apart from the rest. So when hosting your next event, go where a world of possibilities await just a few sandy steps from your beach towel – because in Long Beach, whatever you do, you're in for the unconventional. [visitlongbeach.com](http://visitlongbeach.com)



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**M**GM Grand is proud to introduce Stay Well Meeting spaces to the Grand Conference Center.

### STAY WELL MEETINGS

Stay Well Meetings is the first-ever integrated wellness meetings experience, offering the healthiest environment possible for high-performance corporate events. Each Stay Well Meeting space is designed to optimize the health and well-being of attendees through a variety of amenities. Guided by the seven wellness principles of the WELL Building Standard (air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and mind),

the Stay Well Meetings Program is designed to increase productivity, mental acuity and alertness, while reducing stress and fatigue. The end result is a meeting space filled with features and programs that enhance the wellness of attendees and promote more engaging and productive meetings.

Our Stay Well Meeting spaces feature more than 15 evidence-based health and wellness elements, including advanced air purification to reduce allergens and toxins, WELL Shield: a self-cleaning coating applied to high-touch surfaces throughout the meeting space, circadian lighting that emulates natural daylight, high-quality water stations, healthy catering options and many more.

Along with these amenities, Stay Well Meet-

ings include health and wellness breakout sessions, a curated menu of healthy food options, mental activities to stimulate creative thinking and release tension, light stretching exercises, vitamin D break to get some sunshine and enhance well-being, and designated areas for meditation and relaxation.

### STAY WELL GUEST ROOMS

Stay Well rooms are designed with more than 20 innovative, evidence-based wellness features intended to maintain guests' health and well-being during their hotel stay. Stay Well guest room features include vitamin C-infused shower, air purification system, dawn-simulation lighting, all-natural memory foam mattress, aromatherapy and more.

Feeling well rested, alert and relaxed is not always easy, but thanks to the Stay Well Meeting spaces and guest rooms, you can look forward to the ultimate health and wellness experience at MGM Grand.

### ENTERTAINMENT AND AMENITIES

As for entertainment, there's a venue to pique every interest. The Grand Garden Arena regularly hosts the world's biggest musical acts and championship boxing, while KÀ by Cirque du Soleil is a hypnotizing fusion of acrobatics and pyrotechnics. For something a little different, take in a performance from the amazing master illusionist David Copperfield, check out the new Vaudeville-inspired Beacher's Madhouse or witness celebrity comedians at Brad Garrett's Comedy Club.

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### FACTS & FEATURES

**Guest Rooms:** 5,044 guest rooms including 751 suites

**Meeting Space:** 602,000 sf

### SPECIAL SERVICES & AMENITIES

5 Green Keys rating for sustainable business practices; award-winning staff of Certified Meeting Professionals, many of whom are also industry specialists; the ultimate in entertainment and nightlife including 11 award-winning dining experiences. McCarran International Airport, conveniently located one mile from MGM Grand, serves 51 air carriers and averages 980 daily flights.

# HEALTHY MEETINGS lead to HEALTHY RESULTS.



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LAS VEGAS



STAY WELL  
MEETINGS

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Four Diamond  
Award

Stay Well® Meetings at MGM Grand is the first-ever integrated meetings experience, offering numerous amenities and design features to help enhance the wellness of attendees and promote a more productive meeting. The wellness experience continues with our beautiful Stay Well rooms and suites, designed with innovative features to promote restful sleep and relaxation. After the day's events, attendees can witness legendary entertainment at the Grand Garden Arena, unbeatable dining, and thrilling nightlife, all accompanied by our world-class service. MGM Grand offers the best of Vegas under one roof. Sleep Well. Work Well. Stay Well.

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**Stay Well rooms with vitamin C showers**



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## New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau

2020 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA, 70130

Cara Banasch, Vice President of Convention Sales and Strategy • [cbanasch@neworleanscvb.com](mailto:cbanasch@neworleanscvb.com)  
504-566-5034 • Fax: 504-566-5021 • [www.NewOrleansCvb.com](http://www.NewOrleansCvb.com)

Over the years, New Orleans has built a foundation for events with large attendance while maintaining its historic charm and Southern hospitality. The city has made \$1.5 billion worth of capital improvements in the past three years with even more on the horizon. Major structural developments, world-class facilities and rich culture are just starting points that make New Orleans the ideal place for meetings of any size.

### CONVENTION CENTER

The Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (MCCNO), with its 1.1 million sf of contiguous exhibit space and first-rate service in handling events, has made New Orleans one of the top meetings destinations in the world. The recent \$52 million renovation produced a striking new façade, a 60,000-sf Great Hall and a large outdoor pedestrian plaza. The center also implemented a high-density Wi-Fi connectivity solution that is capable of serving 20,000 users simultaneously.

With facility renovations completed, MCCNO is embarking on a new development project that will revitalize 47 acres of untapped land on the upriver side of the center. A linear park along the boulevard, direct access to the Mississippi River with an outdoor entertainment area, arts and cultural venues, and more retail options are among the prospective ventures that will elevate the visitor experience. The project also includes a four-

star, world-class headquarters hotel connected to the convention center and a corporate conference center that will help New Orleans remain competitive among major cities. Ideally, substantial work will be underway by the city's tricentennial in 2018.

Other improvements in the city include the developments at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, which added daily departures to major U.S. and international cities, and just completed \$400 million in transformations for a more contemporary terminal. Numerous hotels have undergone multimillion-dollar upgrades to their guest rooms, meeting spaces and lobbies. The Outlet Collection at the Riverwalk recently reopened with \$80 million in renovations and is the first outlet to be located in the heart of a city's downtown.

One of America's most walkable cities, New Orleans boasts 22,000 hotel rooms within a two-mile radius of the convention center and other world-class venues. The city also provides a range of transportation for visitors such as streetcars and pedicabs, which offer guests the opportunity to admire the remarkable architecture, visit famous music venues and dine at signature restaurants. With more than 1,400 restaurants in New Orleans serving a vast array of unique dishes, every visitor's palette will be more than satisfied.

The number of repeat visitors and record-breaking attendance figures reveal that event planners have already taken notice of this magnificent city. With its hosting capabilities and entertainment options, New Orleans is taking the meetings, conventions and trade show industries to the next level.

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### CITYWIDE FACTS & FEATURES

**Guest Rooms:** 37,100

**Hotels/Resorts:** 263

**Meeting Space:** 1.1 million sf

### CONVENTION CENTER FYI

The freshly renovated New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center is an essential component in the success of the city's major business events. With 1.1 million sf of contiguous exhibit space, the center is the sixth largest convention facility in the nation, and it consistently ranks among the country's top 10 facilities that hold the most conventions and trade shows annually.

# GET DOWN TO BUSINESS. THEN JUST GET DOWN.



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CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

*New Orleans*  
ERNEST N. MORIAL  
CONVENTION CENTER

**B**ringing your meeting or convention to New Orleans means you have access to one of America's largest exhibition spaces—over 1.1 million contiguous square feet. It means coming to a city that knows how to do big events. It means staying in some of the nation's finest hotels with meeting spaces designed just for you. It means you're coming to the home of the hospitality pros. And it also means when business is done, you can loosen your tie or kick off your heels in a city like no other. It means a walkable city with world-class cuisine and a chance to toast your success in the place that does business better than anywhere else. **Contact us today to get started.**



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## South Point Hotel & Spa

9777 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, NV 89183

Maureen Robinson, Director of Sales • sales@SouthPointCasino.com  
702-797-8050 • Fax: 702-797-8051 • www.SouthPointMeetings.com

The South Point Hotel and Spa hosts meetings of all shapes and sizes. The gateway location, private ownership and commitment to exceptional value and service contribute to the hotel's popularity with meeting groups and the local business community alike. Because it is privately owned, South Point has the flexibility to work with groups to ensure the best value.

Located at the south end of Las Vegas Boulevard, South Point is away from the hustle and bustle of the Las Vegas Strip, but only minutes away. The South Point is a great place to brainstorm, network, close deals and then call it a day with its many luxurious amenities.

### MEETING FACILITIES

A new 80,000-sf column-free, carpeted Pavilion/Exhibit Hall and dedicated conference space provides a one-stop destination for everything from 500-booth expos, 5,000-person banquets, 4,000-person general sessions to boardroom retreats for 10 persons. The property boasts 165,000 sf of exhibit, meeting and banquet space including 75,000 sf of conference meeting space, which includes a 25,000-sf Grand Ballroom, 22 breakout and meeting rooms, two boardrooms and 7,500 sf of prefunction space with a built-in registration desk. Meeting spaces feature full banquet and catering facilities as well as high-speed and wireless Internet connections.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Attendees stay in 2,163 accommodations within the 25-story hotel. While the 500-sf standard rooms measure among the largest in town, they boast all the amenities expected from a first-class Las Vegas property including complimentary Wi-Fi, coffee makers, safes, plush sleeper beds and 42-inch plasma TVs. The suites command penthouse views of The Strip, surrounding valley and mountains.

### DINING AND MORE

Ten dining options are offered ranging from 24/7 room service to a traditional deli, 24-hour coffee shop, fine-dining steak house, Italian, Mexican, sushi, seafood, prime rib, buffet and Michaels gourmet restaurant.

A sprawling lagoon-style pool, 16-screen movie theater, 64-lane bowling center, Costa del Sur Spa and fitness center, 400-seat showroom, 4,600-seat arena and 80,000-sf casino complete the full spectrum of onsite attractions.

### INGREDIENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

Fairly new additions include the 80,000-sf column-free Pavilion; Tea House Asia, a sushi restaurant; and complimentary Internet in the spacious guest rooms and suites.

South Point features great customer service, the finest food at affordable prices and a clean, pleasant environment. Their goal is to supply all the tools to help make every planned event a complete success.

As many satisfied meeting planners exclaim after a successful meeting at South Point: "The South Point is the best-kept secret on Las Vegas Boulevard." AC&F



### FACTS & FEATURES

Guest Rooms: 2,163  
Meeting Space: 165,000 sf

### SPECIAL SERVICES & AMENITIES

- 10 restaurants
- 7 bars and lounges
- 64-lane bowling alley
- Movie theater with 16 screens
- 30,000-sf Spa Costa de Sur and fitness center
- 400-seat showroom
- Beautifully landscaped pool
- The South Point Arena features permanent seating for 4,600 and flexible staging space.

# WE MAKE IT EASY



**F**

rom the RFP to the thank you letter, we value your time. Quick responses and great follow-up is our MO here at the South Point. One owner, one hotel makes it easy for you and us. Another value is we have very little turnover in sales... easy for you, repeat business for us. The South Point is a convention hotel that will offer your group enough amenities without the high prices and the crowds up the street.

## *Easy One Stop Shopping, We Are A Destination With:*

- ◆ 2,163 Guest Rooms/Suites
- ◆ 75,000 sq. ft. Conference Center
- ◆ 80,000 sq. ft. Carpeted Column-Free Exhibit Hall
- ◆ 4,600 Seat Arena
- ◆ Spa Costa Del Sur & Fitness Center
- ◆ 11 Restaurants
- ◆ 7 Bars/Lounges
- ◆ 64-Lane Bowling Center
- ◆ Movie Theater with 16 Screens
- ◆ Lagoon Style Pool

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**SOUTH POINT**  
Las Vegas



## Team San Jose San Jose McEnergy Convention Center

408 Almaden Boulevard, San Jose, CA 95110

Mark McMinn, Director of Sales, Team San Jose • [mmcminn@sanjose.org](mailto:mmcminn@sanjose.org)  
800-SAN-JOSE • Fax: 408-277-3535 • [www.SanJose.org](http://www.SanJose.org)

**N**inety-eight percent of convention planners and trade show executives declare that San Jose is great for meetings and trade shows. The reasons? Three words: Ease of booking! Yep, unlike other destinations, San Jose has a unique model where with one phone call a planner can be connected and check availability for the San Jose McEnergy Convention Center and more than 8,000 hotel rooms — 850 rooms are connected to the convention center and another 1,500+ within a block of the center.

On top of the stellar hotel package, San Jose's compact campus-like downtown allows conventions to truly own the city. San Jose offers the ease of booking the destination as if it were a big-box hotel property. This saves the event planner valuable time, energy and resources, so they can focus on the success of the meeting.

### DISCOVER SAN JOSE

As the 10th largest city in America and the Capital of Silicon Valley, San Jose is known as a business mecca, but offers all the sophisticated entertainment options delegates need for staying and playing. Another reason to meet here is our exciting and easy-to-navigate destination. San Jose offers central and easy access to great attractions in the city, as well as other great Northern California attractions including world-class golf courses, wineries, Santa Cruz beaches, Monterey and San Francisco.

### NEW WICKEDLY FAST, FREE WI-FI

Team San Jose and City of San Jose officials recently announced the launch of free Wi-Fi throughout the San Jose Convention Center — the best free Wi-Fi service experience in the nation. This extends the city's popular Wickedly Fast, Free Wi-Fi already offered at the Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC) and within downtown San Jose — delivering reliable, fast, free Wi-Fi connectivity to business travelers and conference attendees — an experience that only happens in Silicon Valley. One connection covers an attendee from the airport to the downtown core and throughout the convention center.

### BIGGER, BETTER CONVENTION CENTER

The San Jose Convention Center recently debuted its \$130 million makeover and introduced an additional 169,957 sf of flexible ballroom and meeting space with a hip, modern design and state-of-the-art technology — bringing the new grand total to 550,000 sf of flexible space.

- Total Convention Space: 550,000 sf
- Total Exhibit Space: 324,760 sf
- Total Contiguous Exhibit Space: 165,000 sf
- Room for 1,000 10-by-10-foot booths
- New Grand Ballroom: 35,194 sf
- Total Meeting Space: 112,523 sf
- Prefunction Space: 104,566 sf
- Total Breakout Meeting Rooms: 43
- Downtown Committable Rooms on Peak: 2,200
- Citywide Committable Rooms on Peak: 4,000

### WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

Book San Jose now!

AC&F



### CITYWIDE FACTS & FEATURES

**Guest Rooms:** 9,000  
**Meeting Space:** 550,000 sf

### CONVENTION CENTER FYI

The Idea Tree is a new interactive outdoor public artwork at the Convention Center Plaza and is a sculptural gateway inspiring visitors to participate in Silicon Valley's creative idea landscape.



# The Best Is **HERE**

Everyone wants to be the next Silicon Valley, but no one can replace the original. As the Capital of Silicon Valley, San Jose now offers Wickedly Fast Free Wi-Fi beginning at the Mineta San Jose International Airport, within Downtown and throughout the Convention Center with technology born HERE.

Purpose built for speed and powered by multi-gigabit internet connectivity, designed to support multiple devices per attendee allowing thousands of attendees to stream simultaneously without interruption. Get your group's Geek on with the nation's best FREE Wi-Fi and no fine print. Really. It's HERE.

**Meet HERE. Book a meeting today!**

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**SanJose**  
Innovation starts here



## The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino

3355 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109

Chandra Allison, Vice President of Sales • Chandra.Allison@Venetian.com  
702-414-4202 • Fax: 702-414-4806 • www.VenetianPalazzoMeetings.com

**O**ne Lens. Many Facets. Take a look inside. The feeling is akin to lifting a kaleidoscope to your eye: a mesmerizing display of new amazements crop up at every turn. Discover the many facets of The Venetian, The Palazzo, Sands Expo and The Venetian Palazzo Congress Center, the premier resort and convention venue in Las Vegas, and watch a world of wonderful experiences unfold.

Industry professionals delight in the venue's streamlined event planning services. A team of seasoned experts, supported by a staff more than 8,000 strong, offers dedicated assistance with every aspect of your event, to transform each imagined detail into reality.

Located in the heart of the Las Vegas Strip, only minutes from McCarran International Airport, the travel and logistical convenience of this venue is unrivaled. The universal appeal of such an iconic destination in one of the world's great entertainment capitals also makes it highly desirable to attendees. Guests adore the Old World romance of The Venetian, with the unforgettable charm of a gondola ride accompanied by a live serenade or an enchanting stroll along the Grand Canal. The Palazzo offers the perfect complement, featuring sophisticated, modern Italian design that immerses guests in exclusivity and elegance.

The 7,000 suites at this opulent all-suite resort, averaging 700 sf each — roughly twice the size of

the typical Las Vegas hotel room — cater to the needs of business travelers.

### MEETING FACILITIES

The complex welcomes meetings, conventions and exhibitions of all sizes, in more than 2.25 million sf of flexible meeting space. The Congress Center features an impressive 85,000-sf, pillar-free ballroom, as well as 298 conference rooms. The adjacent Sands Expo is renowned for its state-of-the-art convention facilities, with 1.9 million sf of newly renovated meeting and show space.

Together, the properties form the largest LEED-certified green building on the planet, while the Sands ECO 360° initiative ensures that every effort is made to minimize environmental impact.

### THE ULTIMATE ALL-IN-ONE VENUE

At the end of the day, business naturally transitions to pleasure, creating networking opportunities that cultivate relationships, both new and old. Guests choose from among 32 dining options, including an impressive list of James Beard Award-winning celebrity chefs. Fashion enthusiasts are drawn to the 300 boutiques of the Grand Canal Shoppes, while those looking for a quiet retreat will find their sanctuary at the award-winning Canyon Ranch SpaClub.

The Venetian, The Palazzo, Sands Expo and The Venetian Palazzo Congress Center form the ultimate all-in-one venue, where everything is within reach. From unparalleled hospitality, to award-winning service, to impeccable meeting facilities, this multifaceted destination creates the kind of extraordinary experiences your guests will remember fondly for years to come.

AC&F



### FACTS & FEATURES

**Guest Suites:** 7,000

**Meeting Space:** 2.25 million sf

### SPECIAL SERVICES & AMENITIES

Business Center, Venetian Showroom, Canyon Ranch SpaClub, nightly entertainment, 30+ onsite restaurants, outlets and lounges. Located minutes from McCarran International Airport.

# ONE LENS. MANY FACETS.

2.25 M SQ. FT.  
MEETING SPACE

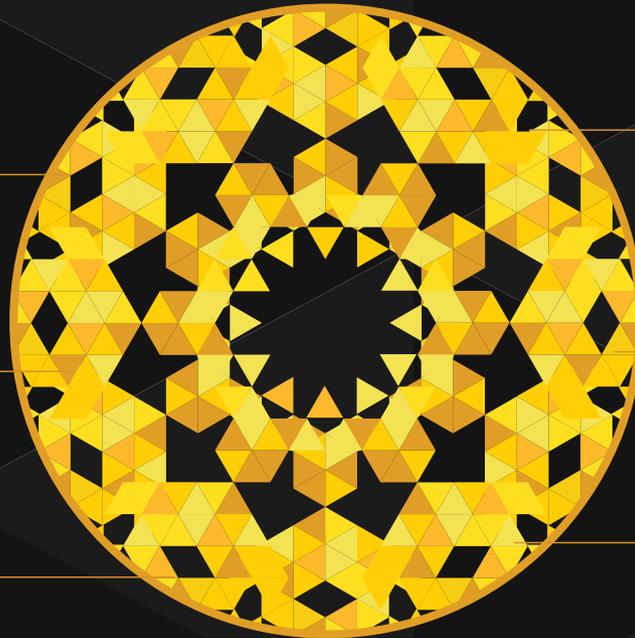
7,000 ALL-SUITE  
RESORT

32 RESTAURANTS

8,000 PASSIONATE  
TEAM MEMBERS

ECO 360°

300 SHOPPES



Dive into a kaleidoscope of world-class hospitality and meeting facilities, all right here at our multi-faceted resort, guided by our expert meeting professionals.

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3355 Las Vegas Boulevard South Las Vegas, NV 89109



## Wynn Las Vegas

3131 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, NV 89109

Steve Blanner, Executive Director of Convention Sales • Stephen.Blanner@wynnlasvegas.com  
702-770-7800 • 866-770-7268 • www.wynnmeetings.com

There is an understanding at Wynn Las Vegas and Encore that their success lies in the complete satisfaction and success of every group that meets here. For planners who want to create an unforgettable meeting experience in the heart of one of the most exciting cities in the world, the industry-leading meeting facilities of Wynn and Encore await.

### FIVE-STAR SERVICE

With a staff dedicated to providing individualized service and support from initial contact to final departure, planners will experience firsthand the renowned service that has earned Wynn and Encore more Forbes Travel Guide Five Star

Awards than any other casino resort in the world. Groups large and small are brought together in beautiful, well-appointed spaces, customized and complemented with unexpected touches of elegance like terraces and balconies that allow for that breath of fresh air and floor-to-ceiling windows, which afford gorgeous views of sparkling pools, gardens and the Wynn Golf Club.

Their catering department is renowned for creating unequalled culinary events, or guests may enjoy the array of fine and casual dining experiences at any of the 19 restaurants at Wynn and Encore where master chefs prepare their signature cuisines for private dinners or luxurious receptions.

### WAYS TO ESCAPE

An abundance of recreational and relaxation op-

portunities allow attendees to discover experiences suited to their individual interests. The award-winning Spas at Wynn and Encore offer a full menu of rejuvenating services, saunas and plunge pools.

The Wynn Golf Club is the only course attached to a resort on the Las Vegas Strip, offering a magnificent par-70 course with 18 holes of challenging golf.

For an exciting evening immersed in fantasy, danger and reverie, "Le Rêve – The Dream," set in the resort's intimate aqua theater, combines the awe-inspiring skills of aerialists and synchronized divers as they take guests on a breathtaking, dream-like journey. Or dance into the early hours of the morning at the hottest nightclubs on The Strip — Tryst, XS, Surrender and Encore Beach Club — which offer some of the world's most celebrated nightlife experiences with internationally renowned disc jockeys performing nightly. These spaces also can be used for private events.

### PERFECT ACCOMMODATIONS

At the end of the day, the rooms and suites at Wynn and Encore offer the perfect retreat for each member of your group with luxurious décor and amenities designed for ultimate comfort and convenience. Every room features breathtaking views courtesy of floor-to-ceiling windows, signature Wynn Dream Beds with fine European linens, touch-screen lighting, temperature and privacy controls, and an oversized marble bath with separate shower and soaking tub.

For meetings that produce more than just results, but result in something greater than you ever expected, Wynn Las Vegas and Encore await. 



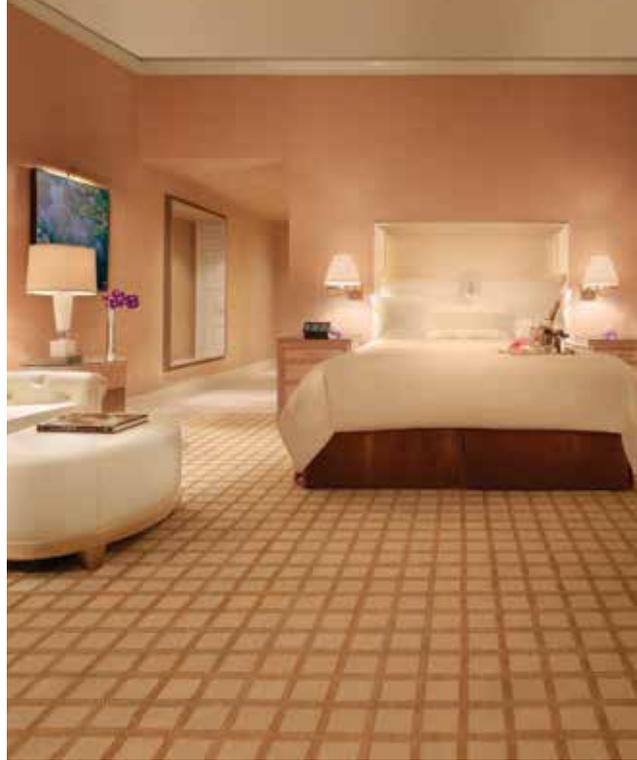
### FACTS & FEATURES

**Guest Rooms:** 2,716 rooms and suites at Wynn and 2,034 at Encore

**Meeting Space:** 260,000 sf

### SPECIAL SERVICES & AMENITIES

We offer high-tech support, a full-service business center, high-speed Internet access, spacious sunlit meeting spaces and state-of-the-art audio-visual capabilities. In addition, three technically supported stages are available.



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# California

## An Expanding Convention Scene Up and Down the Coast

By Patrick Simms

**I**n California, the nation's third largest state after Alaska and Texas, there are numerous iconic and colorful site selection options, from a sophisticated metropolis like San Francisco to a quaint seaside town like Monterey. Yet California's multidimensional cities offer much more than sun 'n' fun. Depending on their inclinations and the season, delegates can enjoy skiing, hiking, theme park rides, art museums and music festivals, and some of the best hotels and resorts in the country.

Though California's endless appeal begins with its distinctive beauty, for planners, the Golden State's expanded and expanding convention centers in San Francisco, San Jose, Anaheim and San Diego, seal the deal. And of course, they love the wide range of uniquely Californian venues available for memorable events.

### San Diego

A great example in San Diego is the USS Midway, one of America's longest-serving aircraft carriers, which was laid down in 1943 and was the largest ship in the world until 1955. The museum, featuring more than 60 exhibits and 29 restored air-

craft, made for a memorable offsite excursion for attendees of the 2012 American Financial Services Association's Independence Conference & Exposition. "We rented out pretty much the whole aircraft carrier," notes Michele Battaline, CMP, director, meetings and conferences. "We did a reception on the flight deck followed by dinner inside where they have flight simulators. Grown men became like young boys in the simulators; they loved it." The 450 attendees also loved experiencing a different kind of history at their host property, the Hotel Del Coronado, built in 1888. The beachside, Victorian-style resort offers 679 renovated guest rooms and 65,000 sf of meeting space.

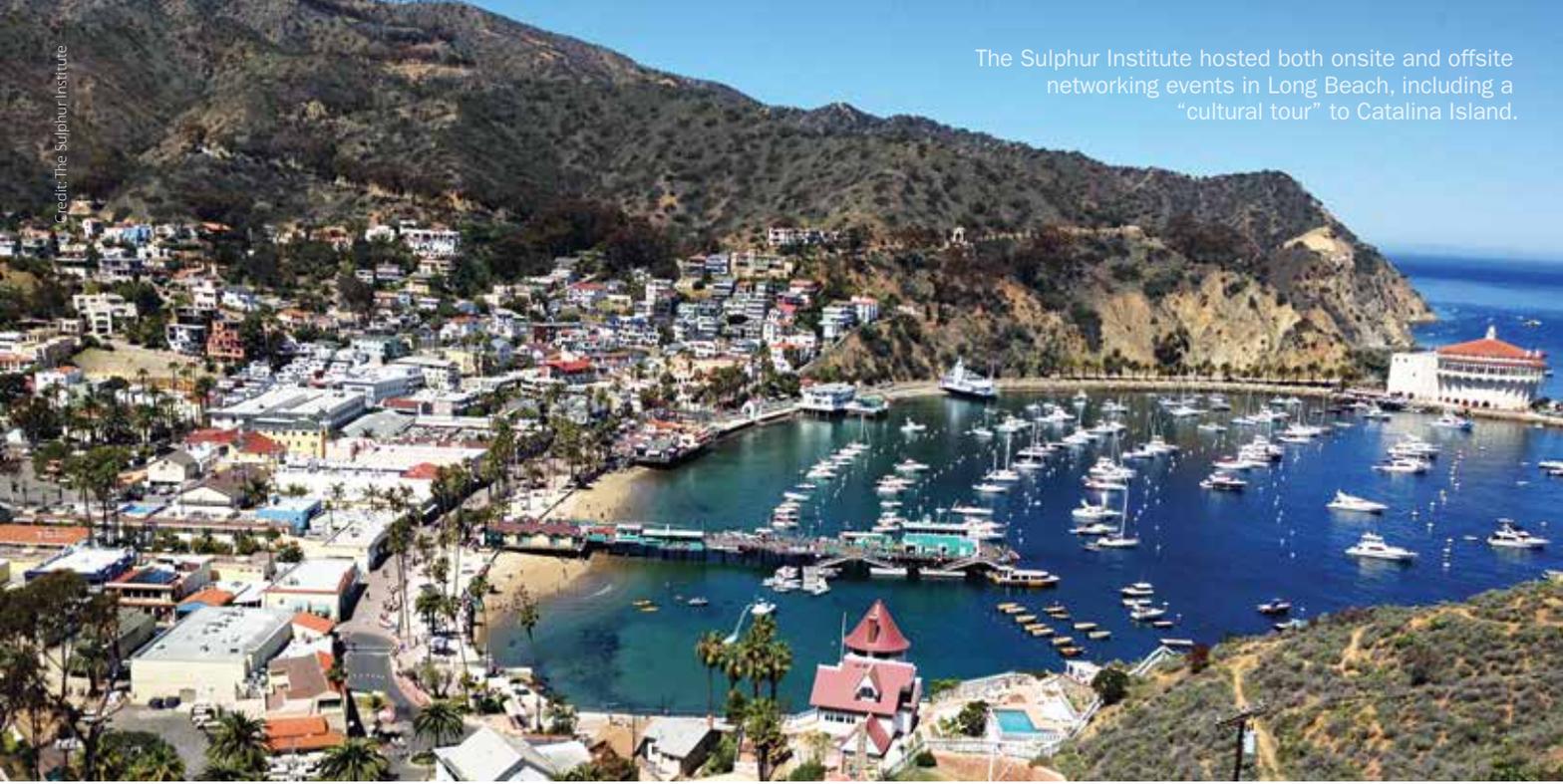
AFSA may qualify as a California "regular" with its 2014 Independence Conference & Exposition held in La Quinta, and its 98th Annual Meeting to be held in Los Angeles in October.

Area updates include the news that the San Diego Convention Center expansion will not commence late this year as had been scheduled, due to a state appeals court's ruling the financing plan invalid. While the numbers are straightened out, the

The American Financial Services Association rented San Diego's USS Midway for a reception on the vintage aircraft carrier's flight deck.



Credit: Michele Battaline, CMP



facility continues to be a strong economic engine, recently hosting conventions such as the American Thoracic Society Annual International Conference and the NAFSA 2014 Annual Conference & International Education Expo. The facility currently offers 525,701 sf of exhibit space and 204,114 sf of meeting/ballroom space.

Meanwhile, improvements to the city’s hotel infrastructure are moving along. The Bay Club Hotel & Marina, for example, will soon complete a \$1.2 million makeover that includes a remodeling of all 105 guest rooms and upgrades to its 2,000 sf of meeting space.

Suitable for much larger groups, the Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego completed the redesign of its 1,628 guest rooms and suites last summer, and this year continued with the completion of its first- and fourth-floor meeting spaces, including two ballrooms. Bayview, a 2,700-sf private event space and California’s highest waterfront venue, is set to debut this fall. Originally built and utilized as a private residence, Bayview features an expansive balcony boasting panoramic views of the San Diego Bay, Coronado Island, Point Loma and the city skyline. Bayview will be able to accommodate groups of up to 150 for a reception and 90 people for dinner. The Manchester offers more than 125,000 sf of function space, and now features a 450 Mbps wireless network, “eight-hour banquet chairs” with flex backs, meeting planner offices in proximity to the meeting space, LED lights in the meeting space, an improved wayfinding system and more.

A highlight of San Diego’s

fine dining scene is the Addison at the 249-room Grand Del Mar resort, Southern California’s only five-star, five-diamond restaurant. This summer, the Addison’s award-winning chef, William Bradley, began serving as culinary director of the new Bijou French Bistro in La Jolla. The European-style eatery encompasses 10,000 sf and features a private dining room. Of course, fine dining is only the beginning of what delegates can enjoy in San Diego, a city also known for several major museums, including the Natural History Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art and the USS Midway Museum.

## San Francisco

Some nationally or globally based association groups may require the airlift of a major hub like San Francisco International Airport, which offers nonstop flights to more than 34 international cities on 29 international carriers. The Bay Area’s largest airport connects non-stop with 78 cities in the U.S. on 15 domestic airlines.

While the airport and the first-tier city it serves are quite familiar to many association meeting planners, San Francisco is offering some new special-event venues to consider.

In August, the Village, a 17,000-sf event venue with more than 1,300 person capacity spread over three floors, opened on Market Street. In September, the transformed Presidio Officers’ Club, the city’s most historic building, reopens after a transformation. Its 2,955-sf Ortega Ballroom will feature expansive



Rendering of the renovated Ortega Ballroom at the historic Presidio Officers’ Club, which boasts expansive views of San Francisco Bay.

Credit: Presidio Officers’ Club



Credit: San Jose McEnery Convention Center

The newly expanded San Jose McEnery Convention Center added 169,000 sf of flexible ballroom and meeting space for a total of 550,000 sf.

San Francisco Bay views. And in October, the James R. Herman Cruise Terminal will offer groups more than 60,000 sf of shared-use space on non-cruise days.

The most significant development in San Francisco's meetings industry is without question The Moscone Center Expansion and Improvement Project. This summer, officials announced that the \$500 million project is on schedule and on budget, after more than a year of community outreach and review. The plan will create more than 500,000 sf of contiguous exhibition space; replace 25,000 sf of surface parking, exit ways, ramps, etc., with pedestrian-friendly space; and add more than 8,000 sf of open public space. Construction is expected to begin in December 2014 and be completed by the fall of 2018.

"Without this expansion, \$2 billion in economic activity will be lost between now and 2020," said Joe D'Alessandro, president and CEO of the San Francisco Travel Association.

## Monterey

The Sacramento-based Association of California Water Agencies has gathered its delegates in Monterey for the last 30 years. Holding spring and fall conferences for directors and employees of water agencies, the ACWA meets in other California cities as well, including Sacramento as an alternate for its spring conference. But in Monterey the ACWA held an offsite event that



Credit: Anaheim Convention Center

The Grand Plaza outside the entrance to the Anaheim Convention Center offers 100,000 sf of outdoor and special event space.

captured what many see as the essence of California, as part of the association's 100th year anniversary celebration in 2010. Hosted by Monterey Beach Party at the company's 5,000-sf Del Monte Beach House, ACWA delegates enjoyed a "classic California beach party" complete with deejay and fire pits. Such an event also would be an ideal choice for out-of-state delegates whom a planner wishes to immerse in beach culture.

For its May conference this year, the ACWA partnered with the Portola Hotel & Spa at Monterey Bay, a 379-room, nautically inspired property that houses more than 50,000 sf of indoor meeting space and nearly 60,000 sf of outdoor event space, as well as the 319-room Monterey Marriott, offering 56,000 sf of meeting space. The Hotel Pacific, a nearby boutique property, was used for overflow, given the ACWA's total attendance of nearly 1,800. The Portola is connected to the Monterey Conference Center, which offers 41,000 sf of meeting and banquet space. "The three properties that we used worked really well together," notes Paula Currie, ACWA director of member services and events. "The conference center is connected to the Portola, and the Marriott is directly across the street over a walking bridge, which makes it really convenient." The group uses the conference center for its exhibition. "The hall is located very close to our registration area. And that makes for a really good flow for getting people into the hall, which is really important to our exhibitors. When you have a hall that's in another building or on another floor, it makes the traffic a little less."

Monterey itself is "a beautiful city by the ocean that is really attractive for our attendees," says Currie, adding that the group enjoys nearby Pacific Grove, Fisherman's Wharf and Pebble Beach. ACWA also has held a dinner at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The aquarium offers several venues for rental: the Open Sea Galleries (accommodating 300 reception, 120 seated), the Ocean's Edge Galleries (300, 80) and Cindy's Waterfront Restaurant (150, 50). The entire aquarium, which accommodates 2,500 attendees, can also be rented.

## San Jose

San Jose has already seen ROI from the newly renovated and expanded San Jose McEnery Convention Center, welcoming new groups that required the additional space. The \$130 million project, completed last October, added 169,000 sf of flexible ballroom and meeting space, bringing the new grand total to 550,000 sf. More recently, free Wi-Fi was installed throughout the San Jose McEnery Convention Center, extending the city's popular Wickedly Fast, Free Wi-Fi already offered at the Mineta San Jose International Airport and within downtown San Jose. "With new technology infrastructure created by leading Silicon Valley technology companies, we are offering a world-class technology experience," says Karolyn Kirchgesler, chief executive officer for Team San Jose. "Convention attendees can stream video,



The Ontario Convention Center offers more than 225,000 sf of flexible meeting space, which includes a 70,000-sf, column-free exhibit hall.

stay connected and keep up to date on all of their devices and do so for free.”

As the “Capital of Silicon Valley,” San Jose is a natural location for the Tech Museum of Innovation, where planners can hold private events. Other options include the San Jose Museum of Art, with spaces available for 100 to 3,000 guests, and the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum of Art & Planetarium. And Napa Valley is about a 1½-hour drive away.

## Anaheim

Following what appears to be a trend in California’s convention centers, the Anaheim City Council recently approved a 200,000-sf expansion of the Anaheim Convention Center. The \$180 million project will create a state-of-the-art multipurpose, flexible meeting and exhibit space connected to the existing facility by a climate-controlled pedestrian bridge. The project is expected to be completed by fall of 2016.

Citywide conventions slated for Anaheim will benefit from five new hotel developments underway in the Anaheim Resort District: Two SpringHill Suites (172 rooms and 120 rooms, respectively), and the 178-room Hyatt Place Anaheim Resort all opened this summer. In addition, the 262-room Hyatt House Anaheim Resort is set to open in early 2015, and a 215-room Homewood Suites by Hilton-Anaheim Main Gate Area hotel is expected to open late 2015.

The West Coast’s answer to Orlando, Anaheim is a popular choice for groups traveling with children, and its world-class theme parks always have new experiences in store. For example,



The Pacific Ballroom at the Long Beach Arena, which made its grand opening debut last November, can accommodate up to 5,000 for a reception.

this year Universal Studios Hollywood is introducing “Despicable Me Minion Mayhem,” a 3-D Ultra-HD movie motion-simulator adventure. And Disneyland Resort’s Big Thunder Mountain Railroad, originally opened in 1979, reopened this March with various enhancements, including a restored historic Rainbow Ridge Mining Town.

## Los Angeles

The tourism and meetings industry is thriving in Los Angeles, which saw record hotel occupancy of 76.8 percent last year. This year, 28 citywide conventions are booked into the Los Angeles Convention Center, and future convention groups will enjoy \$10 million in upgrades at the facility. Scheduled for completion next August, the project includes the installation of a new, energy ef-

**“We did a reception on the (USS Midway) flight deck followed by dinner inside where they have flight simulators. Grown men became like young boys in the simulators; they loved it.”**



Michele Battaline, CMP  
Director, Meetings and Conferences  
American Financial Services Association  
Washington, DC

cient solar-ready “cool roof” on the South Hall and Concourse Hall; new carpeting throughout the center; parking system improvements; a remodeling of the 299-seat Theater; and upgraded air walls, IT infrastructure, lighting systems and numerous operating systems. The future also may bring a 1,000-room hotel directly connected to the convention center. City officials behind the proposal argue that 4,000 more rooms are needed within walking distance of the venue to help the convention center book bigger and more lucrative events.

While Los Angeles is a dense urban center — the most populous city in California and second most populous in the country — meeting groups still can take advantage of the state’s balmy weather by convening outdoors. Among the options for special events is the 12-acre Grand Park in the heart of downtown, as well as numerous venues in neighboring areas. Examples include the Bel-Air Bay Club, with views of Santa Monica Bay and the Pacific; the 160-acre Descanso Gardens, featuring the scenic Rose Pavilion; the 206-acre grounds of the Huntington Library in San Marino; the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in

## “(The Long Beach CVB) really went above and beyond. From initial contact through the execution of our event and to post-event follow-up, they were there.”

Stephanie Santini

Manager, Meetings, Member Relations and Office Services  
The Sulphur Institute  
Washington, DC

Simi Valley; and the Taglyan Cultural Complex, with 20,000 sf of modern meeting space.

### Ontario

Billing itself as the “affordable alternative” to Los Angeles and Orange County, Greater Ontario is accessible via three international airports and less than 30 minutes away from downtown Los Angeles and Anaheim. Within Ontario, the logistical conveniences continue. More than half of the city’s 6,000 hotel rooms are within walking distance of the Ontario Convention Center, which offers more than 225,000 sf of flexible meeting space, including a 70,000-sf, column-free exhibit hall, a 20,000-sf sectional ballroom and 24,000 sf of meeting rooms. Recent upgrades to the facility include a new solar roof, energy-efficient ballroom lighting and an in-house Starbucks (to be constructed).

Delegates who want a breath of fresh air between sessions will soon be able to enjoy the new, \$6.9 million Ontario Town Square Park, opening on two acres in the historic downtown area. The park includes an open-air amphitheater (seating up to 1,000), a rose garden for small gatherings, a courtyard with benches and free Wi-Fi. Ontario is also home to California’s largest value retail shopping destination, Ontario Mills. And participants can explore several fascinating nearby regions, such as Norco horse country and the vineyards of Temecula Valley to the south, and the high desert communities of Apple Valley and Victorville to the north, where the California Route 66 Museum can be found.

### Long Beach

In April, The Sulphur Institute, a Washington, DC-based organization held its Sulphur World Symposium in Long Beach for the first time. Nearly 200 delegates of the trade association met at the newly renovated Renaissance Long Beach Hotel. The 374-room property offers 21,000 sf of meeting space and a central location that is “close to restaurants and shops. Our attendees really liked being in the middle of the action,” notes Stephanie Santini, manager, meetings, member relations and office services.

Southern California’s weather in the spring was “enticing” for the global audience (particularly those from colder climates), she says, and Long Beach is “walkable and safe. Those are among the things I look for as a meeting planner and also what our attendees look for in a destination.” Santini personally found the Long Beach Airport “very easy to navigate, but given that our audience is global many needed to fly into LAX. And for the most part people didn’t find (the commute) difficult; it’s only about 25 miles.”

The Sulphur Institute hosted both onsite and offsite networking events, including a “cultural tour” to Catalina Island. “As a planner I found it quite easy to orchestrate. We took attendees down to the Catalina Express boat dock and after arriving on the island they enjoyed an hour-long tour of Catalina followed by free time to enjoy the island. It was a great networking opportunity,” says Santini. She also extols the services of the Long Beach CVB, which “really went above and beyond. From initial contact through the execution of our event and to post-event follow-up, they were there. They actually showed up onsite on the first day of our conference just to make sure everything was set, that they didn’t need to intervene or offer any assistance with the vendors we were working with.”

### Newport Beach

Located an hour away from Los Angeles and San Diego, respectively, Newport Beach offers groups a serene coastal environment with nine unique villages, a renowned yacht harbor, a nature preserve and world-class golf courses. Surfing, canoeing, paddleboard, hiking, Segway tours and other activities can easily fill up attendees’ free time. Planners can arrange a Hornblower cruise for a memorable change of scene from one of Newport

Beach’s upscale hotels, such as the 110-acre Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort & Marina, which offers 50,000 sf of meeting space.

Two of the city’s major resorts, Island Hotel Newport Beach and Balboa Bay Resort, have recently improved their facilities. A redesigned pool space and private dining at the new Oak Room are now available at the Island Hotel, which

houses 300 guest rooms and 23,000 sf of meeting space. The four-diamond property also is refurbishing its guest rooms and redesigning its fitness center. This March, the Balboa Bay Resort, 18,200 sf of meeting space, debuted the Waterline Newport Beach, featuring a “water to table” dining experience. In addition, the 159-room resort has revamped its lobby with coastal-inspired décor and more natural lighting.



The Balboa Bay Resort is the only waterfront resort in Newport Beach.

Credit: Balboa Bay Resort

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Visit Orlando has named **Faye Memoli** as senior national account executive for the mid-Atlantic region and **Kelly Albert** as senior national account executive for the Northeast region. Memoli was director of Eastern regional sales at Choose Chicago. Albert was national sales manager at the Montego Bay Convention Centre in Jamaica.

**Marco Bloemendaal** was named senior vice president of sales for Visit Milwaukee. He

most recently served as senior vice president of convention sales and services for Visit Seattle.

Visit Indy has named **Minerva Garcia** as national sales manager. She was national sales manager with the Louisville (KY) Convention and Visitors Bureau.

**Sally Sutera** was named regional director of sales, Northeast region, for Visit Baltimore. She was regional director of sales and

services for onPeak, an event housing vendor headquartered in Chicago.

The San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau has named **Tyler Orwig** as director of sales and **Sandy Gaudet** as senior sales manager. Orwig was director of sales for the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia, and Hyatt Regency Coral Gables in Florida. Gaudet, based in Washington, DC, was previously a senior sales manager at the San Francisco Hilton. AC&F

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