The Great Generational Divide

How to Best Motivate and Engage Distinct Groups

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INSPIRATION COMES NATURALLY HERE.

Ideas seem to come easier at Streamsong Resort. Perhaps it’s the wild, untamed wilderness surrounding you or the openness of the land. Or the towering sand dunes and glistening lakes of the two acclaimed golf courses. Or the extraordinary resort that’s at the center of it all. Secluded yet accessible. Streamsong is a one-of-a-kind retreat in Central Florida that inspires creativity. A place for your executives to do their best thinking and your clients to be awed. It’s not hyperbole to say Streamsong is where inspiration just seems to come naturally.

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It’s Better in The Bahamas

I just returned from The Bahamas as I attended the 2015 FICP Annual Conference November 9–12 at the Omni Nashville Hotel. More than 600 participants agreed that the conference was a great success. Attendees chose from an array of education sessions, including three captivating keynote presentations. Leading off the conference was industry favorite Michael Dominquez, who discussed the state of the industry, economic concerns and trends to anticipate in the coming years. Sally Hoghead captured attendees’ attention on Tuesday with her keynote address, “The Fascination Advantage: Unlocking Your Personality’s Natural, Hardwired Advantages,” which explored the science of fascination as it relates to personal branding. Wednesday’s closing keynote by Jearlyn Steele delivered an impactful presentation, where she examined the importance of passion and purpose in everyday life.

A unique aspect of this year’s Annual Conference was the cruise ship experience, where attendees spent the day aboard Royal Caribbean’s Allure of the Seas. While on board, attendees heard the keynote presentation from Michael Dominquez, enjoyed an entertainment show and lunch in the Royal Promenade, and experienced the unique meeting venue.

Attendees also enjoyed several networking events throughout the conference. Sunday’s opening reception was a lively affair, providing a glimpse into the Bahamian celebration Junkanoo. Attendees chose from seven onsite restaurants during Monday’s dine-arounds, which offered a more intimate networking experience. Sunday’s opening reception was a lively affair, providing a glimpse into the Bahamian celebration Junkanoo. Attendees chose from seven onsite restaurants during Monday’s dine-arounds, which offered a more intimate networking experience. Finally, Tuesday’s evening pool party featured a “Colors of the Bahamas” theme, complete with Bahamian cuisine and entertainment. Attendees also enjoyed several networking events throughout the conference. Sunday’s opening reception was a lively affair, providing a glimpse into the Bahamian celebration Junkanoo. Attendees chose from seven onsite restaurants during Monday’s dine-arounds, which offered a more intimate networking experience. Finally, Tuesday’s evening pool party featured a “Colors of the Bahamas” theme, complete with Bahamian cuisine and entertainment.

A successful The Network – Live also provided attendees a chance to connect in a business-centered environment. The 14th Annual Silent Auction was a success as well, raising $50,306.90 for Junior Achievement, which is the educational partner for FICP.

Harvey Grotsky
These snapshots were captured at the 2015 FICP Annual Conference held November 15–18 in Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas. The event drew more than 600 planners and hospitality partners who soaked up an array of education sessions, spent a day aboard Royal Caribbean’s Allure of the Seas, reveled in the Bahamian celebration Junkanoo, enjoyed seven onsite restaurants during Monday’s dine-arounds and attended an event on Tuesday evening featuring a “Colors of Bahamas” theme — complete with Bahamian cuisine and entertainment. The 2016 FICP Annual Conference is set for November 9–12 at the Omni Nashville Hotel. www.ficpnet.com
Eau Palm Beach Launches New Programs

PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL — Recently crowned Florida’s Top Resort in the prestigious 2015 Condé Nast Traveler’s Readers’ Choice Awards, Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa announced a new oceanfront restaurant and lounge, a culinary program with fresh menus and exciting gastronomic events, a bespoke Cultural Concierge program and a beauty compendium at the Forbes Five Star Eau Spa.

“We’re thrilled to share our latest expressions of the modern Palm Beach lifestyle with new and returning guests this winter season,” said Michael King, managing director of Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa. “Winter is an exciting time in Palm Beach, and we’re dedicated to providing our guests with distinctive programs and experiences that embody the spirit of this award-winning destination.”

New executive chef Josh Tomesen will premiere exciting new menus, and the Breeze Ocean Kitchen will introduce a dramatic new design, menu focus and personality. Open daily from sunrise to sunset, the space includes a “look out” bar floating above the resort’s private beach, GPS-controlled sail roofing, a dynamic music scene, farm-to-glass juice program, vintage cocktails and light bite menus of Floridian flavors. www.euapalmbeach.com

Turnberry Isle Miami Debuts New Guest Rooms

AVENUTA, FL — Turnberry Isle Miami recently introduced 241 renovated guest rooms and suites in the South Florida resort’s Jasmine and Magnolia buildings. Boasting private balconies and views of the resort’s golf courses, pools and tropical grounds, the spacious guest rooms and suites range from 500 sf to more than 2,400 sf. The rooms have new carpeting, draperies, furnishings and linens. The introduction of new contemporary artwork bring a modern touch to each room. Guests will enjoy the hotel’s new custom deluxe mattresses and box springs by Serta, 47-inch, flat-screen TVs, iHome clock radios with the latest Bluetooth technology, personal Keurig coffee machines and bath room amenities by Molton Brown. www.turnberryislemiami.com

Omni Frisco Hotel to Open Early Summer 2017

FRISCO, TX — Executives from Omni Hotels & Resorts and the Dallas Cowboys, along with Frisco Mayor Maher Maso recently previewed details about the Omni Frisco Hotel, which is set to open in early summer 2017. The hotel will serve as a cornerstone of The Star development, which will be anchored by the Dallas Cowboys World Headquarters and The Ford Center, as well as events on the plaza.

The hotel will feature 300 guest rooms and suites, a fine-dining venue, a lobby coffee and wine bar, and a rooftop pool bar and grill. The rooftop pool and deck can accommodate 300 to 400 guests, and offers three fire pits, cabanas and a bar and grill.

The hotel will feature 24,000 sf of meeting space, inclusive of a 13,000-sf Ford Center.

OMNI FRISCO HOTEL

The hotel will feature 24,000 sf of meeting space, inclusive of a 13,000-sf Ford Center. Located at The Star by leaving their room amenities by Molton Brown.


Meeting planning can be a complex affair, but when it comes to coordinating group golf outings, planners can to an extent “leave it to the pros.” In her six years of planning meetings for Baton Rouge-based Louisiana Farm Bureau Insurance, Jennifer N. Meyer, director of agency services, has found that “usually the golf pros are really good at what they do” and the director and staff can autonomously handle a multitude of tasks relating to the tournament.

Her most recent experience with this expertise was at La Torretta Lake Resort & Spa in Montgomery, Texas, about 40 minutes outside of Houston. Louisiana Farm Bureau Insurance held its Sportsman’s Holiday incentive trip at the resort in September, and the agents enjoyed a Ryder Cup-format golf tournament on the lakeside course. The services of La Torretta’s PGA-certified staff are myriad, including pairing sheets, registration, personalized cart placards, pre-event announcements, scoring and customized scoreboards, conducting special contests, bag drop, sponsorship signage, prize distribution and more. That’s quite a lot of details that a planner needn’t stress over, and golf pros will even advise on which tournament format and course (when there is a choice) will best suit a group’s skill level and goals.

Ponte Vedra Inn & Club’s Shoot for the Pin activity is designed for groups of up to 25 participants who compete for closest to the pin honors on the island 9th hole on the Ocean Course.
Course Choice
When golf is a key recreational component, however, course choice can inform site selection for the meeting itself. An incentive trip for avid golfers, for example, will be more motivating when qualifiers are scheduled to visit a resort with a famous course, as Lee Trevino, the first-ever collaborator among these greats of the game. Out West in Arizona, the AAA Four Diamond Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa offers newly rejuvenated bunkers and greens on its 27-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature desert golf course, framed by the Santa Catalina mountains. Nongolfers can experience the beauty of the desert on the resort’s Sonoran Desert Walkway, offering an educational glimpse into the flora and fauna of the desert. The resort also recently underwent a $35 million rejuvenation encompassing all 487 guest rooms and 64,000 sf of meeting space. In Central Florida, Streamsong Resort is building Streamsong Black to complement Streamsong Red and Blue. Scheduled to open in autumn 2017, Streamsong Black will be designed by Gil Hanse, architect of The Olympic Golf Course in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and co-designer of Castle Stuart Golf Links in Scotland, among other prestigous courses. The new course will stand apart from the Red and Blue courses and challenge players with rolling elevation changes, accent by native grasses and panoramic views of rivers and the surrounding landscape. Yet Streamsong’s existing courses are already strong draws for experienced golfers, having recently been named to Golf Magazine’s list of “Top 100 Courses in the U.S.” In less than three years since opening, the courses have garnered accolades from Golfweek and Golf Digest as well. Also in Florida, the Innisbrook Golf Resort’s famed Copperhead Course recently reopened after a six-month restoration. Managed by Salamander Hotels & Resorts, the Copperhead is one of the 10 resort courses that constitute the company’s new Salamander Golf Collection. (Salamander is offering a variety of packages to entice groups to play all 10, including Salamander Resort & Spa’s new golf package with the acclaimed Crensholt Farms Golf Club, a Nicklaus Signature course recently renovated.)

“If your group has more seasoned golfers, consider adding a club or ball fitting to get golfers to arrive early and increase networking opportunities.”

Mindy Gunn, V.P., Meeting & Event Planning Manager, Enterprise Meeting and Event Services, Wells Fargo Bank NA, Scottsdale, AZ

“We want them to be healthily competitive with one another in the office, and that kind of transfers over to the greens!”

Jennifer N. Meyer, Director of Agency Services, Louisiana Farm Bureau Insurance, Baton Rouge, LA

“The bunkers and greens on The Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa’s 27-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course recently were rejuvenated.”

Signature Design, located in nearby Aldie, Virginia.)

Yet another golf hotbed is the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, where attendees enjoy golf privileges at four championship Sandestin golf courses — Baytowne Golf Club, Burnt Pine Golf Club, Raven Golf Club and The Links Course — as well as the Dunes putting course at Sandestin. Inviting, Texas-based SEI Meetings & Incentives plans an incentive program for an insurance and financial company at the Hilton Sandestin in July.

Encouraging Competition
Among the 600 total attendees (including families) were many avid and casual golfers who participated in a tournament on the Raven course, relates Lisa Lisenbee, senior account director with SEI. Contests such as closest to the pin and ladies’ and men’s longest drive were part of the outing. “They are very competitive, and we don’t announce our winners at the course; we wait until later that afternoon to post it on our hospitality desk, and people are chomping at the bit to know,” says Lisenbee. “We also build a lot of competitiveness and engagement through our mobile app. For example, an event app can be used to send teasers to golfers about the upcoming announcement of the winners.”

In North Florida, the AAA Five Diamond Ponte Vedra Inn & Club aims to be healthily competitive with one another in the office, and that kind of transfers over to the greens! Lee Trevino — the first-ever collaborator among these greats of the game. Out West in Arizona, the AAA Four Diamond Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa offers newly rejuvenated bunkers and greens on its 27-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature desert golf course, framed by the Santa Catalina mountains. Nongolfers can experience the beauty of the desert on the resort’s Sonoran Desert Walkway, offering an educational glimpse into the flora and fauna of the desert. The resort also recently underwent a $35 million rejuvenation encompassing all 487 guest rooms and 64,000 sf of meeting space. In Central Florida, Streamsong Resort is building Streamsong Black to complement Streamsong Red and Blue. Scheduled to open in autumn 2017, Streamsong Black will be designed by Gil Hanse, architect of The Olympic Golf Course in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and co-designer of Castle Stuart Golf Links in Scotland, among other prestigious courses. The new course will stand apart from the Red and Blue courses and challenge players with rolling elevation changes, accent by native grasses and panoramic views of rivers and the surrounding landscape. Yet Streamsong’s existing courses are already strong draws for experienced golfers, having recently been named to Golf Magazine’s list of “Top 100 Courses in the U.S.” In less than three years since opening, the courses have garnered accolades from Golfweek and Golf Digest as well. Also in Florida, the Innisbrook Golf Resort’s famed Copperhead Course recently reopened after a six-month restoration. Managed by Salamander Hotels & Resorts, the Copperhead is one of the 10 resort courses that constitute the company’s new Salamander Golf Collection. (Salamander is offering a variety of packages to entice groups to play all 10, including Salamander Resort & Spa’s new golf package with the acclaimed Crensholt Farms Golf Club, a Nicklaus Signature golf course recently renovated.)

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handles most of the logistics surrounding the tournament, there are certain best practices for planners that can ensure the event runs smoothly. The first step is to make the golf event scheduling part of the contract. “Usually I write into the contract that we’re going to want to play golf on Tuesday with an 8:30 a.m. start, for example,” says Meyer. “Some clubs are closed on Mondays or they only allow members to play in the morning. So you want to make sure that all those details are not going to be a problem.”

Relaying all the logistical details to participants is also vital. “Tell them what to expect, what time to be where, what to eat beforehand to warm up,” advises Lisenbee. “Let them know what time the first shuttle and last shuttle runs, and provide them the address as soon as possible can help. “We try to do very early tee times when we do golf in August,” says Meyer. “We usually provide it if asked.” The availability of bottled water throughout the day of play, with no scores and it just makes for planning and execution a great course together.”

With so many great courses in warm climates such as Arizona and Florida, corporate golfers may find themselves battling too-hot temperatures on occasion. Scheduling the outing as early as possible can help. “We try to do very early tee times when we do golf in August,” says Meyer, usually as early as the course will open, 7:30 for instance. “The golfers who were part of Lisenbee’s client group at the Hilton Sandestin thoroughly enjoyed the course but ‘were sweating from being out there all day,’” she recalls. “We do start early with an 8 a.m. shotgun, so we get them out there before it gets extremely hot. But we also take precautions, such as having plenty of branded water on the carts.”

Particularly on warm days, planners should “make sure the course has enough beverage carts to service the group — request additional staff if needed,” Gunn suggests. “The courses don’t always volunteer it but will typically provide it if asked.” The availability of bottled water throughout the usual day of play, with no scores and it just makes for planning and execution a great course together.”

It's an opportunity for senior management to “spend some quality time on the course just to get to know certain reps a little better and what motivates them.”

Lisa Lisenbee Senior Account Director SEI Meetings & Incentives Irving, TX

It's also important to cater to nongolfers by booking a resort with a variety of recreational options, whether other sports, spa or exploring the local area. “The Torretta Lake Resort & Spa, for example, is located about 20 minutes outside of the Woodlands, which is a really good area for shopping,” Meyer says. Boating also was popular. “Many of our agents from South Louisiana brought their own boat, which they could dock at the hotel for free.”

“For a round of Footgolf where golf pros, casual players and beginners, and even nongolfers can all get out and experience a great course together.”

Brock Bulbuck, president and CEO of Winnipeg, Manitoba-based Boyd Group Income Fund, notes that “we have a broad range of golf skillsets among the attendees of the company’s leadership meeting held annually at The Wigwam in Litchfield Park, Arizona. That calls for ‘more of a fun event than a serious golf event. We play golf one afternoon during 2½ days of meetings. It’s just a very informal, low-key Texas scramble to ensure speed of play.’” (The Texas scramble requires that at least four drivers of each of the four team members be used during the round, thus getting the weaker drivers into the game.)

Having partnered with The Wigwam for seven years, the group has found that “many of the staff that are serving us there currently were there seven years ago. They know us, we know them, and it just makes for planning and execution much easier and much more seamless,” Bulbuck comments.

The resort also has kept its Gold Course (nicknamed the “Arizona Monster”) well maintained, he observes. “The course has improved over the years, (as they) continue to upgrade its quality, conditions and playability.” This year marks the 50th anniversary of both the Gold and Patriot courses, and the former underwent an extensive renovation and redesign this summer. “With this update, the course is more playable for the average golfer while continuing to challenge even the most accomplished player,” asserted Leo Simonetta, director of The Wigwam Golf Club, in a statement. The Wigwam consulted with Tom Lehman, former British Open champion and winner of numerous PGA Tour events, in revamping Trent Jones Sr.’s original design.

Here again, a planner effective-ly relies on the expertise of the pros to ensure that attendees’ experience on the greens is top notch, which reflects positively on the meeting as a whole.

Whether it’s a meeting for 2 or 2,000, our 64,000 square feet of flexible indoor space and imaginative outdoor areas will inspire clear-thinking productivity. Book your group by July 31, 2016 and receive a signing bonus of 1,000 Starpoints® for every 10 room nights booked. Call 1-800-677-6338 for details, or visit westinlapaloma.com

MEETINGS THAT INSPIRE BEYOND THE BALLROOM

The Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa Tucson

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INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

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Walk into any financial or insurance office and you’re bound to see a diverse group of individuals. From suit-donning, gray-haired executives carrying leather-bound portfolios, to tennis-shoe-wearing 20-somethings with iPads in hand, to middle-age leaders lugging their laptops from meeting to meeting. This generational divide among at least the three largest groups (baby boomers, Gen X and millennials) is causing meeting planners to take notice and determine the best way to engage these distinct groups in their next event.

According to Sarah Sladek, author of Knowing Y: Engage the Next Generation Now (Association Management Press, U.S. 2014) and CEO of XYZ University, the three largest generations in the workforce today are baby boomers, Generation X and millennials — also known as Generation Y. The Generation Zs are turning 19 this year, so we’ll start hearing more about them in the next year or so as they begin moving into college and careers.

“The ‘distinct group’ everyone is talking about is the millennials, because this year they became the majority of the work force,” Sladek says. “This is a monumental shift considering boomers have been the majority of the work force for 34 years.”

Millennials are beginning to dominate the workforce, and though the majority have just entered the job market or have recently stepped into early leadership roles, soon they’ll be the key decision-makers. Engage them in unique, fun and impressionable events now, and you’ll be building a mutually beneficial relationship for the future, say the experts.

Millennials are distinct for several reasons: They are the largest generation in history; the first generation of the post-industrial era and the first generation never to have known life without access to technology. In addition, they are the best-educated and most diverse generation in history, the most protected, supervised and provided-for generation; the first generation to be rewarded for participation and not achievement; and they came of age during one of the worst recessions our country has ever observed, which has left them the most debt-ridden generation in history.

How to Entice Millennials

So how do financial and insurance planners entice millennials to partake in meetings and events in an industry that has been profoundly inundated by the baby boomers and Generation X individuals?

Tamra Fairbrother, CMP, CMM, CUDE, vice president of training and events at Cornerstone Credit Union League, says that although she orchestrates meetings geared specially toward their young professionals or their board volunteers, they also have conferences that blend education across all generations.

“We ensure we have various tracks set up to meet the needs of everyone,” Fairbrother says. “Our larger events have an event app that is gaining usage with each opportunity. The app lists the schedule, speaker information and gives them push notifications during the event of reminders or possible changes. Although the younger generation is known for their utilization of technology, we are finding that with instruction, we are gaining ground with other members as well. At our upcoming annual meeting next April in Oklahoma City, we will add CU Talks in place of a breakout session. These short yet thought-provoking sessions are sure to engage the audience.”

Fairbrother believes that having a
designated Young Professionals Conferences appeals to the millennials and gives them the forum for peer-to-peer networking at various career levels. "At the same time, we provide education sessions at our annual meet not only for the younger professionals but for the volunteer as well," Fairbrother says. "This is of course in addition to other tracks for specific career fields."

In addition, Fairbrother says "cause-related" opportunities at events are often popular as well. "We work to incorporate CSR (corporate social responsibility) events at our larger meetings and find that millennials are always eager to lend a hand or make a donation," Fairbrother says.

Ann Fishman, president of NYC-based Generational Targeted Marketing who wrote and published Marketing to the Millennial Generation (August, 2015), operates a specialized marketing firm that provides insights into the preferences, trends, and buying habits of each of America’s generations. Fishman says that it is important that meeting and event planners in the insurance and financial arenas don’t think of boomers as old. "They picture themselves 10 to 15 years younger than their chronologi- cal age," Fishman says. "They expect to be treated special. Give prizes like spa treatments. These people need R&R. They juggle aging parents, themselves, children and grandchildren. Build that into your meetings. This group loves music from the ‘60s, like Jimi Hendrix, who wrote and published a song in 1967 called "Hey Joe." They are trendier, such as a new restaurant that just opened near their workplace. These people want to be trendsetters."

Likewise, Fishman says millennials travel in groups. So give discounts if they bring friends and colleagues. "Teach them skills to move them ahead. Help them to give a speech, run a meeting, network and negotiate. Give out good bags full of fun stuff," Fishman says. "Millennial discussions have been team-taught, team-graded, and rewarded for showing up for team sports. They love the bonding that goes into team activities." 

"We’ve been doing happy-hour themed events in conjunction with the educational piece," Huang says. "It’s something that is very familiar to this specific group: food and drinks after a day of work. This means our meeting venues are private rooms in bars that are nearby their workplace, serving beer and finger food. It’s also a space that conveys conversational and relationship building, which is exactly the feel that we want in these types of events. We also make sure that these venues are near popu- lar streets or near public transportation for convenience."

However, Huang has found that when they only had social events without an educational piece, there was less followup afterwards. "I think the problem with these events was that it was fun, but it did not convey our expertise and how we could address their needs in a prac- tical way. This also meant no trust was built, even though everyone had a good time," Huang says.

Meeting Their Needs

Meetings are no longer just learning formats, which in turn helps them to learn in a different way. "Organizations that recognize this can adjust the format and content of their events to meet the needs of this group," Soverall says. "Millennials are also collabora- tors who love being part of a team, work with them and have them participate in the discussion and planning of events."

Know Your Audience

Melissa Erenberg, communications and education consultant at Assurance, one of the largest insurance broker- ages in the U.S., also plans meetings and events for this nationwide insur- ance company. The strategies she’s seen fail across generations, specifically millennials, are boring commu- nication collateral and presentations. "In our industry, we’re PowerPoint- focused," Erenberg says. "It definitely has a place in some presentations but it needs to be relied on less. People do not want to do too much work on their slides. It just be a guide. Death by PowerPoint is real. Make in- surance and financial education fun and interesting. Be charismatic when talking about it. Show videos, add pictures and tell stories."

It all comes back to knowing your audience and varying the media used to convey the messaging. "If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always gotten," Erenberg says. "In laymen’s terms, if you continue to communi- cate one way, you’re only going to be heard by a handful of people. Shake it up. Do something different, and spend time to make sure your mes- sage is received." 

"The more we understand, the better equipped we are to meet their needs and offer learning environments that are more productive."

"The future of millennials at events will be increasingly dig- ital, from social media capabilities, to digital invites, to mobile check-ins, millen- nials are craving to bridge the gap between face-to-face interaction and technology. They long to share their ex- periences online while it’s happening in person. The digital revolution will contin- ue to transform events into a hybrid between both in-person and virtual interactions. "Your outreach will be more effective and easier if you under- stand the generational characteristics of each of America’s living genera- tions," Fishman says. "You will un- derstand why you succeed with cer- tain outreachs and how to duplicate that success, and you will learn how to avoid certain failures in your out- reaches. It pays in so many ways to get to know America’s generations and their unique values, attitudes and lifestyles."

The Generations Through the Years

- 1883–1900 The Lost Generation
- 1900–1924 The Greatest Generation
- 1925–1942 The Silent Generation
- 1946–1964 The Baby Boomers
- Early 1960s–1980s Generation X or Gen X
- Early 1980s–Early 2000s The Millennials or Gen Y
- Late 1990s/Mid 2000s–Present Day Generation Z or Gen Z

"The Baby Boomers"

Cameal Soverall
CMP, CMM
Manager, Conferences & Events
Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario, Toronto, Canada

"The Silent Generation"

“….."
Florida

Why Sunshine State Meetings Have It Made in the Shade

By Mark Rowh

The allure of Florida as a destination is unquestionable. How can you top a place that calls itself the Sunshine State? And with the investments made by a number of properties, today’s options may be better than ever.

“Florida offers many of the sun-and-sand benefits which can be so motivating to participants, but is also likely to meet the business requirements of many financial services or insurance organizations,” says Susan Adams, senior director of engagement for Dittman Incentive Marketing in New Brunswick, New Jersey. “When policies require domestic travel, travel within footprint only or restrict the number of days out of office, Florida can inspire guests and satisfy these business rules.”

She adds that the combination of great airlift, reliable hotel partners and creative destination or event management partners can contribute to a memorable experience for guests and make planning easier.

“When you’re considering white sandy beaches for a corporate program, Florida can be pretty hard to beat,” Adams says.

Certainly diversity of offerings is a key factor when considering Florida. The wide range of properties around the state offers nearly unlimited options for meeting planners.

Weather is also an important factor in site selection for Noël S. Mladinich, senior director of event management for Dittman Incentive Marketing in Cincinnati. “Florida is an attractive destination for meetings in the colder months because it can provide respite for our attendees from the more harsh Northern climates,” she says. “It also offers many diverse areas, from Orlando to Miami to the beaches in the Panhandle, it’s far from the only one.

“Florida offers many of the sun-and-sand benefits which can be so motivating to participants, but is also likely to meet the business requirements of many financial services or insurance organizations.”

Susan Adams, Senior Director of Engagement
Dittman Incentive Marketing, New Brunswick, NJ

which can help serve an array of meeting objectives.”

Central Florida

Adrienne Gutbier, second vice president, corporate marketing for Ohio National Financial Services in Cincinnati, reports that Florida is an ideal meeting destination for her company, having coordinated several meetings at the Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort Bonnet Creek. Last winter, 97 qualifying general agents from across the country attended a meeting along with headquarters staff and spouses. Gutbier cites the weather in January and February as a prime factor in the location’s attractiveness.

“This is an incentive for most of our attendees,” she says, noting that sunny Florida will always be a draw in the first quarter of the year, and that historically many of those eligible to attend these meetings reside in states where the weather is less ideal.

“As we have changed our business model and agents across the U.S. are now eligible, weather doesn’t draw quite the way it used to, but it is still a factor,” she says. And she adds that Orlando specifically is a great destination with its airlift capacity and number of direct flights.

And when it comes to accommodating her meetings, Gutbier says the Wyndham has consistently offered everything her groups have needed.

“There is ideal meeting space, wonderful sleeping rooms, great food and beverage, and impeccable service,” she says. “Overall it has been a perfect value proposition for us for three years.”

The 400-room hotel can serve both large and small groups. A total of 32,000 sf of meeting space includes facilities accommodating up to 800, while the smallest, at 304 sf, seats 10. The hotel recently embarked on a meeting space expansion set for completion in May 2016.

“The meeting space fit our group perfectly,” Gutbier says. “We were able to have the ideal amount of general session and breakout space. We were moments from Downtown Disney, which offered a great offsite option for one evening, and being a new property, everything was fresh and sharp.”

A few attendees came early or stayed late with spouses or kids to enjoy the Orlando parks, Gutbier adds. That option served as a welcome bonus to a successful business outing.

Located in the Walt Disney World Resort and offering easy access to the area’s theme parks is the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista. Along with its 814 guest rooms, the hotel has 78,000 sf of meeting space. Prefunction space includes three built-in registration counters that service two large ballrooms. The grand ballroom, with more than 18,000 sf, can accommodate more than 2,000 guests. The hotel recently completed a remodel of public spaces, guest rooms and meeting space. A new walkway bridge between the hotel and the new Disney Springs was completed this fall. (Disney Springs is a transformation of Downtown Disney featuring more dining, shopping and entertainment options.)

At Universal Orlando Resort, with five hotels and several theme park attractions, meeting participants can enjoy both large-scale and smaller events. At the upper end of the spectrum, corporate groups can buy out either Universal’s Islands of Adventure or Universal Studios for an event high-
lighted by exclusive access to rides and attractions. Or for groups under 200, customized options from dinner receptions or teambuilding to “ride & dine” options are available. A variety of venues accommodates from 300 to 1,500 attendees.

New in 2016 will be the Caribbean-themed Loews Sapphire Falls Resort, which will be Universal Orlando’s fifth hotel. It will bring another 1,000 rooms and 115,000 sf of meeting space to the picture. All told, the combined meeting and function space among all of Universal Orlando’s hotels will then total nearly 250,000 sf, with options for meeting the needs of virtually any sized group.

Located within the Walt Disney World Resort, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel recently redesigned every guest room in the 758-room Swan hotel, with the same effort on 1,509-room Dolphin hotel. The rooms feature new upgrades, including large HDTVs, additional power outlets and attractive colors and other design features.

Along with its convenient location between Epcot and Disney’s Hollywood Studios and proximity to Disney’s Animal Kingdom and Magic Kingdom Park, the Swan and Dolphin offers a huge variety of meeting options with more than 329,000 sf of combined meeting space. Some 84 meeting rooms include executive boardrooms and a number of ballroom configurations. One totals 55,000 sf divisible into 16 meeting rooms, and another 34,000 sf is divisible into 11 meeting rooms. Convention and exhibit space tops 110,000 sf, and 99,000 sf of outdoor space includes a number of terraces and courtyards.

The hotel also offers some truly nontraditional event spaces. Dinners, receptions and other group events can be held in areas including banquet kitchens, back hallways and even a giant freezer. With the latter, up to 60 guests may enjoy unusual offerings such as a martini bar served on carved ice, or a raw bar and caviar also served on ice — all while outfitted in parkas amidst the unmatched beauty of our island retreat. Where camaraderie and productivity are enhanced by our tropical ambience, legendary service and noteworthy attention to detail. We’d like to extend an informal invitation to explore the world’s largest private club for your next meeting. We make planning your event just as enjoyable as staying here.

**Northeast Florida**

Among the attractive properties in Northeast Florida is the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront. It offers 110,000 sf of function space including 30 meeting rooms, most of which overlook the St. Johns River. Facilities include more than 21,000 sf of indoor and outdoor space, eight conference suites and space for small meetings.

Twenty-nine miles north of the Jacksonville airport is the oceanfront Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort, which now boasts 80,000 sf of meeting space, including a new 16,825-sf ballroom. The spacious conference center houses more than 15,000 sf of prefunction space as well as an 11,000-sf event banquet facility, featuring a 12,000-sf ballroom, Discovery Cove, with a capacity of 100–400; and TurtleTrek (with the same capacity) with naturalistic habitats featuring rescued manatees and sea turtles. Still other choices include the Penguin Encounter and Wild Arctic.

New in Orlando, I-Drive 360 opened in May. The $200 million retail, dining and entertainment complex revolves around the 400-foot-tall Orlando Eye observation wheel. In addition to a range of restaurants, the complex includes a 420-foot-tall spinning attraction, the StarFlyer, Madame Tussauds Orlando, Sea Life Aquarium, and Skeletons: Animals Unveiled.

Planners looking for an incentive retreat far from the madding crowds would do well to consider Streamsong Resort, located 86 miles south of Orlando and accessible from both the Tampa and Orlando airports. Set on 16,000 acres of dunes, lakes and lagoons, the 228-room resort offers a spectacular grotto-style spa, golf on two championship courses (with a third on the way) and unique outdoor activities (think teambuilding) such as sporting clays at multiple stations and guided bass fishing. The property has 25,000 sf of conference facilities, which can accommodate groups of 10 to 500, as well as 50,000 sf of outdoor event space.

**Meet at our private club. Private island, for that matter.**

Adrienne Gutbier, 2nd V.P. Corporate Marketing, Ohio National Financial Services, Cincinnati, OH

**“We were moments from Downtown Disney, which offered a great offsite option for one evening.”**

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The Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa

The palm trees and spa at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa

“Miami is a prime location for meetings as there is a wide range of properties to choose from, and a plethora of dining and leisure options as well.” Noël S. Mladinich, Supervisor, Meetings & Events

The Panhandle

Located in Destin, in Northwest Florida’s Panhandle, the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa proclaims that it is Northwest Florida’s largest full-service beachfront resort hotel. It offers 602 guest rooms as well as 40,000 sf of recently renovated meeting space designed to handle groups ranging from 10 to 2,000. Included in the total meeting space is the new 7,500 sf Coastal Ballroom.

The Palm Terrace Pool at the Naples Grande Beach Resort

The Palm Terrace Pool at the Naples Grande Beach Resort

The Gulf Coast

Following an $18 million renovation completed earlier this year, the Waldorf Astoria Naples in Southwest Florida transitioned to the independently owned Naples Grande Beach Resort & Naples Grande Golf Course. The 474-room hotel has 83,000 sf of meeting space, five restaurants and bars, three pools and 100-foot waterslide. A scenic boardwalk to the beach winds through a protected mangrove sanctuary.

Alexandra B. Benninger

Southwest Florida

Just opened in 2015 in Hollywood, the 349-room Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort also adds something new to Florida’s already rich selection of destinations. Inspired by the lyrics and lifestyle of “parrothead” singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffett, the hotel, which has announced that it will open ahead of schedule in January 2016, will house 24,000 sf of meeting space, and will be accessible via covered walkway from the convention center.

Prefunction space at the Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort

Caffe Boulud Palm Beach in the Brazilian Court Hotel

Across the bridge to the mainland in West Palm Beach, the new 400-room Hilton West Palm Beach is being constructed next to the 550,000 sf Palm Beach County Convention Center. The convention hotel, which has announced that it will open ahead of schedule in January 2016, will house 24,000 sf of meeting space, and will be accessible via covered walkway from the convention center.

The oceanfront Eau Palm Beach Resort and Spa

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The historic Brazilian Court Hotel, dating back to 1926, where ballroom and Conservatory spaces were recently remodeled. With only 68 units available at any time, planners can consider a buyout of the iconic property.

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In October, Mladinich and her colleagues coordinated a meeting at Turnberry Isle Miami for 100 financial advisors along with partner firm and home office representatives, and they were pleased with the results. A major consideration was the convenient access to both the Fort Lauderdale and Miami airports.

"The sleeping rooms, common areas, dining outlets and meeting space have recently been redone, and are phenomenal," Mladinich says. "The staff, at all levels, is professional and easy to work with."

Located in Aventura, an exclusive section of North Miami Beach, Turnberry Isle is a Mediterranean-style resort covering 300 acres. Along with 408 guest rooms and suites and beach access, it also has two championship golf courses. More than 40,000 sf of meeting space provides planners a variety of options. A grand ballroom totaling nearly 12,000 sf and accommodating up to 1,000 guests can be divided into three sections. The resort’s conference center has 21 meeting rooms, and a 7,314-sf outdoor terrace accommodates up to 400 guests.

The Trump National Doral Miami offers more than 100,000 sf of redesigned meeting space plus 75,000 total sf of outdoor function space. Heading the list is a 24,000-sf grand ballroom. Other facilities include the 9,500-sf White & Gold Ballroom, the 8,100-sf Ivanka Trump Ballroom, and the Crystal Ballroom & Terrace with 7,200 sf of indoor space and an 8,000-sf outdoor terrace.

The Miami Worldcenter, which breaks ground later this year, will be anchored by a new, $750 million, 1,800-room Marriott Marquis Miami Worldcenter Hotel & Expo Center that will include more than 600,000 sf of convention facilities, including a 100,000-sf ground floor exhibition hall, a 65,000-sf main ballroom, a 1,500-seat theater and 390,000 sf of meeting rooms and event space.

Key Largo

The Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, located on 2,500 acres of the northernmost tip of the Florida Keys, welcomes select groups for meetings, corporate retreats and conferences. The property — which has a range of accommodations that include 175 inn rooms, 100 spacious one-, two- and three-bedroom villas and private homes — boasts its own private airport and private 175-slip marina, two golf courses, tennis, croquet and 30,000 sf of meeting space, including a ballroom that can hold 700 and a rooftop terrace for 175 with views of the marina.

Attendees can take advantage of a range of group activities beyond golf and spa at Ocean Reef Club: Angling aficionados can experience deep-sea, flats, reef or backcountry fishing off the shores of the resort; other group activities can include chartered yacht dinners, beachside events, eco-tours and teambuilding programs such as golf cart scavenger hunts, cardboard boat regattas and beach olympics, to name a few.

A new meeting facility, Carysfort Hall, will open in February. Able to accommodate up to 300 guests, the hall will include a 5,607-sf ballroom; five breakout rooms, all with natural light; an expanded, 5,000-sf interactive cooking school where up to 150 attendees can participate in tasty teambuilding activities; and wraparound outdoor decks with breathtaking views of the marina.

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Mind Your Business Florida Style
Louisiana: The Big Easy Is More Popular Than Ever

Louisiana boasts three distinct meeting experiences. New Orleans offers boisterous non-stop revelry, omnipresent jazz and some of the world’s finest restaurants. Baton Rouge oozes revelry, omnipresent jazz Southern charm and provides a variety of riverboat casinos.

But New Orleans remains the main driver of Louisiana’s expanding meetings industry. The Big Easy will be 300 years old in 2018 and is more popular than ever as borne out by key measures such as repeat visitation. During 2014, 62.6 percent of visitors indicated they were making a return trip, according to the 2014 New Orleans Area Visitor Profile study. In addition, 57.8 percent of business and convention visitors extended stays by an average of two nights, up from 55.4 percent in 2013.

First-time Groups

In April, the San Diego-based ISU Insurance Agency Network held a three-day meeting in New Orleans for 280 insurance agents and executives. It was the group’s first meeting in the city, according to Andrea H. Glenn, ISU vice president and meeting planner. The meeting was a hit for everyone, including those who had never been to New Orleans and originally had doubts about coming. “I was surprised at the number of people in our group who had never visited New Orleans,” says Glenn. “Our members range in age from late 20s to mid-60s. There was some concern that some may not like the Bourbon Street scene. I emailed people information about the city, and they saw that there was a lot to do besides partying. Everybody said they had a good time.”

The group chose New Orleans for two reasons. “I poll the group every year on where they would like to go and New Orleans started coming up a lot,” Glenn says. “Also, my priority was making sure people have time to socialize and get to know one another outside of a business setting, and New Orleans has lots of places for that.”

The fun networking activities started during the group’s registration at The Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans. “I had two alligators with handlers set up in one of the meeting halls,” says Glenn. “That was an icebreaker. There was a social media booth set up so people could take their pictures with the alligators and show them to each other. They used the booth to send pictures to friends and coworkers who weren’t there. We also had a Twitter account set up for people to post pictures.”

A welcome reception was scheduled to be held outdoors on The Ritz-Carlton’s grounds. “But it rained so we brought it inside,” says Glenn. “We hired look-alikes from the TV show ‘Duck Dynasty’ through a talent agency. People posed with them for pictures while a Cajun band performed.”

Other events included a cocktail reception with jazz music in The Ritz-Carlton’s Crescent View meeting room, which offers a scenic view of New Orleans. During another function, a dinner in a Ritz-Carlton ballroom, entertainment was provided by Bronkar, who combined comedy, juggling and music. Bronkar bills himself as “the world’s only rhythmic juggler.”

Off-property activities included a gala dinner at the World War II Museum, a popular venue. “It started with cocktails in the French Quarter room at the hotel as a Second Line parade band performed,” says Glenn. “The band led us outside to buses in front of the hotel. At the museum, we had a cocktail buffet with musical entertainment by a 1940s USO-type show we booked through the museum. Attendees took pictures with three women who were dressed in a 1940s vampy style and sailors attired in uniforms from the era.

The museum also hosted a dinner this year for 160 attendees who were staying at The Ritz-Carlton for an insurance company incentive. “We took them over by bus and they saw a movie about World War II narrated by (actor) Tom Hanks,” says Bonnie Boyd, CMP, DMCP, president, BBC Destination Management, a New Orleans DMC. “We brought in a 92-year-old World War II veteran to speak about his experiences. They had exclusive use of the museum’s Louisiana Memorial Pavilion, which was set up for a buffet dinner. They also danced to the band.”

Jazz Attracts Meetings

An international financial firm also held its first meeting in New Orleans — a three-day incentive for about 100 executives at one of the city’s luxury hotels. New Orleans’ music figured significantly in the decision, says Diane

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Andrea H. Glenn, Vice President
ISU Insurance Agency Network, San Diego, CA

Meeting-goers parade through the French Quarter in true New Orleans style.
Le Meridien New Orleans has completed a $20 million renovation that includes 10 designed guest rooms, a new destination restaurant and two other new food and beverage outlets, and 1,600 sf of additional meeting and event space; bringing the total to 20,000 sf. The transformation also includes improvement of existing meeting space, and a redesigned front desk and a more open, more airy entry:

The 366-room AAA Four Diamond Omni Royal Orleans Hotel has completed a $15 million renovation. The makeover includes guest rooms, improved lighting, custom furniture and 24 wrought-iron balconies. Other improvements include refurbished meeting rooms with new furniture, window treatments and carpeting. The property’s 14,000 sf of function space includes 17 meeting rooms and the 5,284 sf Grand Salon.

The New Orleans Riverfront Hotel, formerly the Riverfront New Orleans, has reopened following an $8 million renovation of all guest rooms, which now include new carpet and furniture, 42-inch, flat-screen televisions, and black-tiled bathrooms. Located near the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, the Omni Riverfront offers 202 guest rooms and 4,000 sf of meeting space.

Loews New Orleans has finished a $4 million renovation of its 295 guest rooms and suites as well as Café Adelaide. The property updated and refreshed its corridors and made improvements to carpeting, art, lamps and so on.

The 166-suite Homewood Suites by Hilton New Orleans Downtown opened in the Central Business District with 250 sf of meeting space. The Wyndham New Orleans French Quarter’s completed renovation encompassed 374 guest rooms, parking garage and the property’s exterior.

Other Projects

The New Orleans Ernest N. Moral Convention Center (MCCNO) has been in talks with a group of developers to build The Trade District, a Convention Center District Development Project, which would include the MGM Grand hotel, more than 1,400 residences, a 250,000 sf of retail, a needle-shaped structure and views of the Mississippi River and much more. The development site sits just upriver from the MCCNO, which recently transformed existing spaces into the 50,800 sf, column-free Great Hall. The MCCNO also added 25,400 sf of prefunction space, a 4,600 sf junior ballroom, a 3,420 sf rooftop terrace, a 5,700 sf executive club lounge and a 980 sf indoor balcony. The MCCNO currently offers 140 meeting rooms, 1.1 million sf of exhibit space and the 4,000-seat New Orleans Theatre.

Elsewhere in New Orleans, the historic World Trade Center building will begin construction next year on a $36 million redevelopment project, which will be the home of the Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residences.

In addition, the historic Orpheum Theater has reopened for the first time since 2005 in the city’s Central Business District following a $13 million renovation that includes an expanded lobby, reconstructed acoustic shell, larger seats and more bathrooms and bars. The theater, which opened in 1918, is on the National Register for Historic Places.

The Orpheum is an intimate concert and performance space with perfect sight lines and unparalleled acoustics from each of its seats, which range in number from 1,500 to 1,800 due to the customizable floor seating. Three levels of seating, private VIP boxes at the gallery level and six bars round out the audience experience.

BBBC Destination Management Company arranged this parade for a corporate group meeting in New Orleans.

Lyons, CMP, DMCP, president, Accent on Arrangements, a native New Orleanian who founded the New Orleans DMC. “The group included a lot of Europeans, and they love New Orleans because of jazz,” she says. “We wanted to tie that into their meeting by having jazz musicians in their activities.”

Activities included a parade to a restaurant, “We put them on Mardi Gras-type floats in front of the hotel,” says Lyons. “Each float had 30 people and a jazz trio. They were greeted in front of Emeril’s Delmonico restaurant by costumed revelers. After dinner, they went to a private club on Bourbon Street for cocktails and desert. Afterwards, a jazz trumpet player performed as the group threw beads to people.”

New and Noteworthy

Several major construction projects are underway that New Orleans officials believe will attract even more meetings. “It has been 10 years since Katrina, and we are going gangbusters,” says Boyd. “Our comeback will not fizzle out, and that is what is so exciting about the city’s future. There is a fair amount of building and expansion going on.”

The fastest growing airport in the U.S., Louis Armstrong International Airport, will begin construction on a new terminal facility to be completed in 2018 and has added a variety of new flights.

New Orleans offers about 40,000 hotel rooms with some of the most popular properties within walking distance of the French Quarter. The city has picked up where it left off before Katrina hit, continuing to build new properties and expand existing ones, including the following:

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Horseshoe Bossier City Hotel and Casino, a Caesars Entertainment property with 606 suites and a new $3.5 million tropical swimming pool.

Other gaming properties include Jimmy Buffet’s Margaritaville Resort & Casino, the Eldorado Shreveport Resort & Casino, Sam’s Town Hotel & Gambling Hall, DiamondJacks Casino & Resort, Boomtown Casino Hotel and Harrah’s Louisiana Downs.

Hotel rooms and meeting space are plentiful. The region provides more than 10,000 hotel rooms, with many located along the riverfront. The region’s biggest meeting space is the Shreveport Convention Center, a 350,000-sf, state-of-the-art facility, followed by the 24,000-sf Bossier Civic Center. When it comes to great golf, Shreveport-Bossier boasts several top-flight courses. These include Olde Oaks Golf Club, designed in collaboration with golf pro Hal Sutton and the Golf Club at Stonebridge, designed by the popular PGA pro Fred Couples and Gene Bates.

Like all destinations in Louisiana, Shreveport-Bossier offers tasty cuisine prepared with a mix of cultural influences. The area boasts its own distinctive take on Cajun and Creole dishes and offers traditional Southern dishes with a Shreveport-Bossier twist.

Baton Rouge offers a range of historical, cultural and government venues for special events. Popular sites include Louisiana’s Old State Capitol, a 160-year-old National Historic Landmark and Gothic building featuring displays honoring former governor Huey P. Long, who was assassinated in 1935. The Old Governor’s mansion is a museum with displays and memorabilia showcasing nine Louisiana governors.

The Museum of Art offers a 13,000-sf gallery that accommodates up to 400 guests. The Shaw Center for the Arts, a 125,000-sf mainstay of the revitalized downtown, offers several venues that planners can reserve for gatherings.

The fine-dining scene continues to prosper. Popular restaurants include Beausoleil Restaurant & Bar, Dolce Vita, Blend, The Cove and Juban’s — all of which offer dining space that can be reserved for small groups.

Final Thoughts

New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport-Bossier City can meet the needs of just about any meeting or incentive. That’s especially true of New Orleans. “In the end, what’s important to stakeholders is good returns on investment for sending people,” says Glenn. “Higher-ups who may not go to the meeting want to know that people are having a good time and achieving the goals of the meeting. Louisiana’s diverse amenities and cultural offerings also can help any meeting achieve its goals. ‘You can tailor the experience to each group depending on what they want,’ says Boyd. ‘Some people may not want to do the Bourbon Street scene. They may want something quiet in a private home in the garden district with a three-piece trio. There’s something for everybody.’

The National WWII Museum in New Orleans features immersive exhibits, multimedia experiences, and an expansive collection of artifacts and oral histories.
Ed Curry was named director of sales and marketing at Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel in Santa Monica, California. He formerly was vice president, marketing and direct sales for St. Supéry Estate Vineyards & Winery in Napa Valley.

The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel in Orlando, Florida, has promoted Kristina Moehle to group sales manager for the Southeast market. She most recently served as a catering coordinator. Kelly Hartig was named group sales manager for the Midwest and West Coast markets. She was catering sales manager for The Country Club of Orlando.

Frederik G. Houben was named director of sales and marketing at the Lodge of Four Seasons on the Lake of the Ozarks in central Missouri.

Most recently, he was regional director, sales and marketing for Warwick International Hotels, North America and Bahamas.

Allison Lesser was named director of sales and marketing at Hotel Irvine in Orange County, California. She most recently served as vice president of business development at BHT Hospitality.

John Hess was named director of sales and marketing for the Omni Bedford Springs Resort in Bedford Springs, Pennsylvania. He was director of sales for Seven Springs Mountain Resort in Pennsylvania.

The St. Regis Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia, has named Andrée Heffner as director of sales and marketing. She most recently served as director of sales and marketing at Hotel Jerome, an Auberge Resort in Aspen.

Ommi Hotels & Resorts has promoted Ryan O’Byrne to corporate director, global sales in the Dallas corporate office. He most recently served as global director, sales in the New York global sales office.

The Chattanoogan, a Benchmark Hotel in Chattanooga, Tennessee, has promoted Adriane Elrod Long to senior sales manager. She most recently served as a group sales manager.

Nathan Wood was named director of sales and marketing for The Westin Columbus in downtown Columbus, Ohio.

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