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More Business Meetings and Learning Than Ever

The eighth IMEX America in Las Vegas was a record-breaking event with more than 13,000 participants, among them 6,000-plus attendees and more than 3,000 hosted buyers. The show further extended the range of features by offering a remarkably large and diverse range of experiences meeting the growing demand for interactive live experiential activities that are redefining the scope of the industry itself. Overall, there was great energy and enthusiasm from attendees. If you missed this year’s event, plan now to be there in Las Vegas September 10-12, 2019.

If weather concerns are a factor when planning your events, take a look at “All-Season Meeting & Incentive Destinations” on Page 12. From sunny beach resorts including all-inclusive destinations to urban favorites, the choice of destinations is widespread with everything possible to make a successful event.

Also in this issue, “The Great Divide” on Page 18 creates programs with multigenerational appeal for attendees to connect. According to Melissa Van Dyke, president, The Incentive Research Foundation on our cover, “Including appropriate wellness, giveback and status components can be well-received by all generations.” In addition, she advises planners to “create places and spaces for attendees of various generations to purposely connect.” She also states, “For that reason, it’s important that planners include experiences wherein attendees can seek best practices, advice and problem-solving from their peers, while at the same time, designing space for those same attendees to mentor and learn up and down.”

The evolution of corporate teambuilding over recent decades has made planning these activities easier. See “CSR-Enhanced Teambuilding” on Page 22. According to Katrina Kent, director, The Event Group, TD Ameritrade, “Combining teambuilding and community service... really helps meeting participants connect to a greater purpose and each other.” Impact 4 Good, a company that offers community service-oriented teambuilding programs for corporations, continues to see an uptick in business. Alan Ranzer, managing partner and co-founder, Impact 4 Good, says, “When you do some teambuilding programs for corporations, continues to see an uptick in business. Alan Ranzer, managing partner and co-founder, Impact 4 Good, says, “When you do some

Contemporary Hotels. Yacht Receptions. Poolside Networking. Waterfront Views. Make Marina del Rey your next Southern California meetings destination. Experience 100,000 square feet of total meeting space and an abundance of waterfront dining – just 4 miles north of LAX and minutes from world-famous Venice Beach and Santa Monica.

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ANAHEIM, CA — Anaheim Marriott is taking the meeting experience to the next level for meeting planners and attendees.

According to Phil Alld, director of event management, “The hotel invested in new chairs for our meeting and event space which enable attendees to charge their devices right at their seats during the function, rather than having to race outside to find an outlet at breaks.”

Anaheim Marriott works diligently to set itself apart from other properties across the country with similar space by elevating the food and beverage experience, creating flexible meeting setups and layouts, as well as innovative technological features like these charging seats. The hotel features 169,662 square feet of flexible function space, spread across 23 event rooms with 44 breakout rooms. The largest space is the 25,410-square-foot Platinum Ballroom which can accommodate up to 3,585 people.

www.anaheimmarriott.com

MGM Resorts International Receives Nine Awards at Stars of the Industry Hospitality Awards Gala

LAS VEGAS — MGM Resorts International was presented with nine awards by the Nevada Hotel and Lodging Association (NHLA) during the 89th Annual Stars of the Industry Hospitality Awards Gala in Las Vegas. The event honors exceptional employees working within Nevada’s hospitality industry.

Chuck Bowling, president and CEO of Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, was named the Hotelier of the Year, the NHLA’s highest honor. The Hotelier of the Year is recognized by industry peers for his or her exemplary achievements, contributions and leadership.

MGM Resorts International was also recognized as the Sustainability Leading Company of the Year. This award honors an industry property or business that has developed a culture toward integrating environmental management practices that improve everyday operations, while maintaining quality service and meeting guest expectations. www.mgmresorts.com

Anaheim Marriott Electrifies Meetings With New Charging Banquet Seating

ANAHEIM, CA — Anaheim Marriott is taking the meeting experience to the next level for meeting planners and attendees.

“As a leading meeting and conference destination, Orlando is known for continually investing in the region’s growth, and this next phase of the Orange County Convention Center is another testament to our commitment to this industry,” says George Aguel, president & CEO of Visit Orlando. “The expansion at the center will create a wealth of new opportunities for groups of all sizes and will serve as a catalyst for additional development throughout our convention district, including new hotels, restaurants and entertainment options.” www.orlandomeeting.com

SITE, FICP and IRF Release Landmark Study of the Incentive Travel Industry

Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE), Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) and Financial and Insurance Conference Professionals (FICP) have released the first joint study of the global incentive travel industry. Incentive Travel Industry Index Powered by SITE Index, IRF Outlook and FICP is a landmark for the industry, providing unparalleled, consolidated insights into the current state of incentive travel and where it is headed.

Conducted in association with J.D. Power, the study is a wide-ranging analysis of business conditions, attitudes and expectations impacting the incentive travel and motivational events industry worldwide. With over 1,000 respondents from more than 80 countries, it is the largest survey ever conducted by the incentive travel industry, doubling responses from past individual efforts and netting new insights based on combined questioning. Survey respondents were balanced between incentive travel buyers and suppliers, with buyers representing incentive agencies and corporate users, while more than half of the sellers are DMCs. The majority are tenured industry professionals with an average of 17.3 years of experience — approximately half are leaders in the U.S.

While the survey findings show that incentive travel is on the rise, growth isn’t happening unchecked. For instance, costs of senior players in the incentive travel industry, doubling responses from past individual efforts and netting new insights based on combined questioning. Survey respondents were balanced between incentive travel buyers and suppliers, with buyers representing incentive agencies and corporate users, while more than half of the sellers are DMCs. The majority are tenured industry professionals with an average of 17.3 years of experience — approximately half are leaders in the U.S.

The expansion at the center will create a wealth of new opportunities for groups of all sizes and will serve as a catalyst for additional development throughout our convention district, including new hotels, restaurants and entertainment options.” www.orlandomeeting.com

Orlando Announces Exciting Growth at Convention Center, Meeting Hotels

ORLANDO – America’s most-visited destination is growing its capacity for meetings, conventions and events with new developments at the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) and surrounding convention hotels.

The OCCC is moving forward with a $605 million campus improvement plan that will bring expansions and new meeting and exhibit space in the North and South concourses, further increasing the center’s 7 million square feet of function space.

The expansion includes the Convention Way Grand Concourse, which features additional meeting space and an 80,000-square-foot ballroom with a grand entrance from the North-South building along Convention Way. The 200,000-square-foot Multipurpose Venue is a flexible, divisible, column-free space with a combination of retractable and floor seating to accommodate between 18,000 and 20,000 guests.

The center brings more than 200 conventions and events and hosts 1.4 million attendees each year.

“Orlando is one of the most important meeting destinations in the world, and we are thrilled to see this expansion come to fruition,” says George Aguel, president & CEO of Visit Orlando. “This massive expansion will enhance the convention center’s capabilities along Canada’s Atlantic region.

The OCCC is comprised of 25 properties with combined capacity of nearly 75,000 rooms. The convention center features 7.5 million square feet of meeting space and 240,000 square feet of pre-function space, spread across 23 event rooms with 44 breakout rooms. The largest space is the 25,410-square-foot Platinum Ballroom which can accommodate up to 3,585 people. www.orlandoconvention.com

Margaritaville Beach Resort Grand Cayman Reopens After Extensive Renovation

GRAND CAYMAN, CAYMAN ISLANDS — After a multiyear extensive renovation, the new Margaritaville Beach Resort Grand Cayman will officially reopen on November 1. The massive overhaul includes the property’s 285 guest rooms, the addition of more than 8,500 feet of meeting and event space, a new fitness center and a completely reinvented culinary program.

The guest rooms, all with a balcony or patio, feature signature brand touches to deliver fun and a true sense of arrival at what is intended to be a laid-back escape rooted in relaxation.

The 8,500-plus square feet of meeting space is a design juxtaposition of formal meets fun. The highlight is the nearly 4,700-square-foot ballroom, which is already a sought-after venue for special events. Complementing this is the prefunction area (2,112 square feet), four breakout rooms and an executive boardroom (377 square feet), all boasting 14-foot ceilings.

www.margaritavilleresortgrandcayman.com

Hosts Global Welcomes New DMC Members in Canada and Costa Rica

Hosts Global has added two new alliance members, Downeast Destination Management Company (DMC) servicing Canada’s Atlantic region and Premio DMC Costa Rica. Both companies have decades of experience as their region’s local expert in planning and executing meetings, conventions, incentive programs and special events.

“Downeast and Premio DMCs are fantastic additions to our global consortium,” says Marty MacKay, DMCP president of Hosts Global’s alliance of DMCs. “Both firms ... represent the shared principles of our Hosts Global community and operate in destinations that are in high-demand from our clients.”

Hosts Global members are selected based on stringent criteria to ensure the global alliance is comprised of only best-in-class DMCs. The addition of Premio DMC Costa Rica and Downeast DMC strengthens the consortiums’ presence in Central America and service capabilities along Canada’s Atlantic region. www.hosts-global.com

www.hosts-global.com

www.margaritavilleresortgrandcayman.com
Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa Reveals Newly Renovated Ballrooms, Meeting Spaces

PALM BEACH, FL – Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa, the intimate Forbes Five-Star oceanfront retreat situated along Florida’s gold coast, revealed its newly redesigned ballrooms and meeting spaces, which encompass more than 30,000 square feet of indoor space on two levels in the hotel's north tower. The renovation features contemporary designs by RTKL Associates and modern furnishings that complement the hotel's classic architecture.

Taking center stage of the renovation are the three ballroom spaces — The Grand Ballroom, Ocean Ballroom and Plaza Ballroom — which feature sophisticated furnishings and a neutral color palette. To complement the newly redesigned spaces, advanced technology was installed, including a state-of-the-art sound system and LED lighting throughout. Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa offers a range of event services and can accommodate groups from 10 to 700 in its variety of indoor and outdoor spaces. www.eaupalmbeach.com

Westin Charlotte Unveils New Modern Event Space

CHARLOTTE, NC — The Westin Charlotte has unveiled its newest social event space, Six One Five, an urban-chic venue adjacent to the hotel, ideal for every type of Charlotte event. With a unique feel, this new meeting space offers a large prefunction area and a flexible function space with expansive views of Charlotte. “Six One Five allows the team to continue to innovate and personalize events to create lasting memories that are different from our ballrooms,” says Pamela Bower, director of sales and marketing.

From within the space, guests are treated to views of the expanding Southend from floor-to-ceiling windows. The terrace creates the perfect multi-use setting for outdoor events or executive gatherings. www.marriott.com

Hyatt Regency Sonoma Debuts Its Event Space Redesign

SONOMA, CA — Hyatt Regency Sonoma Wine Country debuts a rustic-chic sanctuary set on eight acres, featuring 90 additional guest rooms and a complete redesign of 40,000 square feet of event spaces, the lobby and all other public areas.

The lobby showcases timeless interior design, with handcrafted details and rustic touches. As an extension of the lobby, the function spaces are also distinctive and inviting with bronze, iron and seeded glass.

Hyatt Regency Sonoma Wine Country features extensive meeting and event spaces, including 15 indoor meeting rooms totaling 18,000 square feet and an additional 20,000 square feet of outdoor space, accompanied by an 80-foot-long water wall, ideal for special events. www.hyatt.com

Pacific World Notes Top Emerging Destinations

SINGAPORE – Pacific World, a global destination and event management company, has identified several emerging destinations and destinations to look out for as MICE options in the coming years. Each location combines the allure of a new and exciting destination with the capacity to provide guests with an exceptional, curated MICE experience.

“Over the past two years, interest in new destinations and unique experiences has increased significantly. This trend in the leisure travel realm is also impacting the incentives and special events market,” says Selina Sinclair, global managing director of Pacific World.

Emerging Destinations for 2019: Bhutan; Namibia; Greater Bay Area – South China; Bordeaux, France; Bodrum, Turkey. Destinations to Look Out For in 2019: Sumba, Indonesia; Phu Quoc, Vietnam; Apulia, Italy; Gangneung, South Korea. www.pacificworld.com
How to Innovate and Succeed in Business

S trategic innovation ranks among the most frequently cited topics in business today, especially for organizations operating in fast-changing and often hugely disruptive business environments. It’s therefore no surprise that many executives are equally concerned about how to drive innovation inside their own organizations, and crafting all manner of meetings, events and strategic treats designed to help leaders both remain relevant and stay ahead of changing times and trends. In the face of today’s fast-moving, hugely volatile business world and the ongoing disruptions it often brings, it goes without saying: Many organizations and individuals continue to struggle with the concept of innovation. Thankfully, it may help with the process of reimagining and reinventing your business to be more cutting-edge going forward — and designing programs and events around these themes — to recall that, according to leading experts (and Merriam-Webster’s dictionary), innovation is far simpler than you may suspect. By definition, it’s simply the introduction of something new.

Certainly, innovation often refers to the concept of game-changing, breakthrough discoveries and technological marvels. But more importantly, as we discovered while researching our new book Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself, Fearlessly Innovate, and Succeed Despite Uncertainty, it can just as easily refer to new concepts, new marketing strategies or new ways of approaching your business or brand to be more meaningful or relevant to current and prospective members. As challenging as the concept of innovating often sounds, reality is that innovation is a conversation we’re merely discussing more creative and resourceful approaches to problem-solving. And, in truth, you may be surprised at just how simple the process of making your organization more agile, more responsive and more competitive is when you come right down to it. In fact, all it often takes for us to be more successful is just a greater sense of perspective — and an immense willingness to be more creative with the tools at-hand.

As the following examples help illustrate, we’re merely discussing more creative and resourceful approaches to problem-solving. And, in truth, you may be surprised at just how simple the process of making your organization more agile, more responsive and more competitive is when you come right down to it. In fact, all it often takes for us to be more successful is just a greater sense of perspective — and an immense willingness to be more creative with the tools at-hand.

Case Study 1: Association for Chemistry and Economics

Over 15 years old, Germany’s Association for Chemistry and Economics (VCW) has more than 30,000 members. Its population is hugely diverse, spread across many sectors and has myriad goals and interests.

Determined to foster communication among these members to help further the profession, the VCW desired to create a network that would allow participants to collaborate with scientists and engineers in every field to be more successful and raise awareness for the organization. That’s because, in the modern age, it knew teamwork would be key to innovation, and accelerating the speed at which it could adapt would be vital. Partnerships with universities, private industry players, public organizations and allies in other fields such as economics would be crucial to its continuing success. Likewise, the VCW also wanted to find a way to drive ongoing innovation on a huge scale.

As a solution, it invented the idea of Social Chemistry — creating an open online portal for the crowdsourcing of ideas, and pooling of resources, to allow members and interested private and public enterprises to: 1. Suggest new concepts 2. Discuss topics of interest and 3. Access collaboration tools for making cross-company initiatives a reality. Not only did the platform let participants submit and share ideas for new projects — it also allowed them to comment on or vote for winning ideas, team up to participate on these solutions and share suggestions by email. Moderators could also view reports, quickly gauge engagement levels — and easily attack project leaders’ contributors, assign deadlines and tasks and send reminders to help fuel creativity. Users could also follow all the latest comments, ideas and messages from contributors, creating a heightened degree of interest in and empathy for any given project.

After five weeks, 11 jury members weighed votes and submissions against four criteria — originality, applicability, feasibility and thoughtfulness of the idea — and winners could potentially see their ideas turned into action. In the wake of these efforts, not only did the number of ideas generated greatly exceed expectation, a significant portion of visitors to the site contributed suggestions, commenting rates were through the roof and the VCW generated a plethora of new initiatives for the industry. It also uncovered important new concepts that the association could build on or encourage members to explore further, and trends the VCW discovered that it needed to be aware of, by undertaking the project.

Case Study 2: Medtronic

When medical device leader Medtronic wanted to expand and its already-successful business throughout Western Europe and beyond, it didn’t double-down on cutting-edge devices. It reinvented its business model instead, extending its offerings to include services and establishing new business units that partnered to put owned-and-operated labs inside hospitals.

Medtronic increased its business and provided partners with significant improvements in customer service and cost-savings by doing so. Having earned their trust, it’s also built a sizable business around ancillary services such as supply chain management and performance benchmarking.

Case Study 3: Orange Telecom

French telecom giant Orange wanted to double the size of its innovation initiatives but didn’t want to invest millions in R&D or hordes of high-priced working professionals. As a result, it created an open online portal for the crowdsourcing of ideas, and pooling of resources, to allow members and interested private and public enterprises to: 1. Suggest new concepts 2. Discuss topics of interest and 3. Access collaboration tools for making cross-company initiatives a reality. Not only did the platform let participants submit and share ideas for new projects — it also allowed them to comment on or vote for winning ideas, team up to participate on these solutions and share suggestions by email. Moderators could also view reports, quickly gauge engagement levels — and easily attack project leaders’ contributors, assign deadlines and tasks and send reminders to help fuel creativity. Users could also follow all the latest comments, ideas and messages from contributors, creating a heightened degree of interest in and empathy for any given project.

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When we’re talking about innovation, we’re merely discussing more creative and resourceful approaches to problem-solving.
Where Can Groups Go on the Island of Hawaii? Almost Everywhere!

Although two-thirds of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is currently closed to the public and early news reports indicated the entire island of Hawaii was disturbed by Kilauea’s active lava flow, in truth, the most recent incident of the volcano’s 35-year-old eruption affects only about 10 square miles of the 4,028-square-mile island.

Here’s the scoop straight from the Island of Hawaii Visitors Bureau: It’s business as usual with such everlasting enticements as east Hilo’s multicultural eating opportunities and interactive science centers; the Hamakua Coast’s hidden rain forest, waterfalls, zip lining and horseback riding. Pushing the adventure envelope are such options as night dives or snorkeling to view manta rays and a helicopter tour over the lava fields of Kilauea, Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea volcanoes.

For a bit of science, there’s star gazing atop the dormant Mauna Kea (named the world’s tallest mountain when measured base to peak), Volcano Winery produces a unique character wine from grapes grown on vines at the 4,000-foot elevation of Kilauea volcano. And a tour of the Kona Coffee Living History Farm gives a peek into the still-producing coffee estate.

New to the scene are these one-of-a-kind tours. Volcano Bike Tours, which explore portions of the renowned “Red Road,” also include a hike to a black sand beach. KapohoKine Adventures offers the opportunity to follow the path of British explorer Captain James Cook by foot and Zodiac boat. Hawaii Forest and Trail (which supports relief efforts in communities affected by recent Kilauea volcano activity) serves up a full-day Epic Island Journey tour including an off-road adventure in exploration of a 150-year-old working ranch and a hike through native forests.

Complete with views of Kilauea volcano.

Official word: The Island of Hawaii Visitors Bureau is monitoring the Kilauea volcano activity and continues to spread the message that it is safe to visit the island of Hawaii and all of the other Hawaiian Islands.

By Cynthia Dial

“We encourage visitors and attendees to embrace the Islands and engage in inspiring programs and rejuvenating experiences that leave them feeling invigorated and, ultimately, allow them to take a little bit of Hawaii’s Aloha Spirit back home with them,” says Mary Neister, vice president, MCI, Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau.

A property that offers boating and other water activities ranks high for incentive trips.

Mary Neister, CMP, vice president, MCI, Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau.

Among these activities, Neister mentions authentic Hawaiian experiences for team building — outrigger canoeing, throw-net fishing, harvesting kalo from loi (irrigated agricultural terrace) and helping to restore centuries-old loko ia (fishponds) built by early Hawaiians. For groups looking to support Hawaii’s sustainability and reforestation efforts, activities involving the Hawaiian Legacy Reforestation Initiative (HLRI), which has planted more than 340,000 “legacy trees” across 1,000 acres on the island of Hawaii (creating the only “legacy forest” of its kind).

Planning something “different” is always memorable, shares incentives specialist Grassi. “Cattle drives, visiting a dormant or active volcano, watching sunrises from atop a dormant volcano and then biking down it — anything that is different from where they live, people will remember forever.”

Her assessment of an incentive to the islands: “Hawaii offers it all — warm weather, eternal sun, beautiful beaches, great resorts, fabulous restaurants and friendly people — all within the safe boundaries of the U.S. Plus, no passport is required.”

According to the Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau, Hawaii’s incentive market has experienced a 63 percent growth in the number of incentive bookings, which accounts for a 75 percent growth in room nights for that segment. Neister’s assessment: “The outlook on Hawaii’s incentive business remains very strong, as organizations bringing incentive programs to the Hawaiian Islands recognize that not only does employee productivity increase when Hawaii is the ‘prize,’ but attendees also return feeling rejuvenated and inspired to focus on personal and professional growth.”

California Dreamin’

“When setting up an incentive trip, it really starts from the moment they receive the award,” says Jennifer Garcia, vice president, sales, for Playa Hotels & Resorts.

Playa’s top incentive destination is a huge motivator for hard-working employees.

A trip to a special destination is a huge motivator for hard-working employees.
Jennifer Garcia
Executive Administrative Assistant to CEO
InterWest Insurance Services LLC
Sacramento, CA

A guest wants — food, sun and fun — is right there onsite. Hotel Xcaret Mexico, an all-inclusive resort in Riviera Maya, is a Caribbean delight. Everything.

Weekends for groups from 16 to 85, a

I try to make each attendee feel like the trip was planned with just them in mind.

Having used a variety of locations in coordinating the Chairman’s Award Weekends for groups from 16 to 85, a tradition for the past 10 years, Garcia details her frequent choice of Lake Tahoe. “For us, the Lake Tahoe region is close enough to be a destination area, but without traveling too far. It’s unique in that you can spend the morning snow skiing and the afternoon in a boat on the water. I’m not sure there are many locations you can do both in the same day.”

As InterWest Insurance’s incentive focus is family-friendly, Garcia highlights this region’s endless variety of activities: golfing, horseback riding, fly-fishing, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking, boating, Jet Skiing and waterskiing; and with winter comes downhill skiing (it’s a world-class ski area), snowboarding or in a common place in a new way,” says Renee Black, principal and senior meeting planner for planitohma, a Midwest- ern-based company dedicated to event and meeting management solutions.

Selecting Chicago time and again, most recently for this year’s April event attended by 500 attendees of a market and meeting management solutions. According to Amy Riley, senior director of business sales, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, “Just as Las Vegas is an around-the-clock destination, it’s also an unbeatable place to bring incentive groups all year long.”

Las Vegas averages 320 days of sun-shine and less than five inches of annual rain, the weather is a perfect fit for host ing outdoor functions and events, as well as golfing, hiking and pool parties. Additionally, many newly opened or planned venues, says Scully, “The racing world’s Eric Paradis). We treat incentives as an opportunity to celebrate success of the organization while having a good time in a new place or in a common place in a new way,”

Garcia says, “Travel to farther away locations when you have world-class locations just hours from you!” Beyond the central location of the Napa region (Calistoga, St. Helena, Yountville) to this Northern California-based company, the planner adds, “It’s wine country and that, in itself, sets it apart from other regions.”

Among its numerous appeals are hot-air balloonings, skydiving, wine tastings and Napa Valley Winery Tours. Its harvest season — (its busiest season, rates are higher, and it’s more difficult to negotiate, but it provides an above-and-beyond experience). Two of the planner’s preferred locations include Harvest Inn (St. Helena) and Napa Valley Lodge (Yountville). Of practical is some of the world’s fastest Audi Sport vehicles on the nation’s only Formula 1 circuit with a pro driver as your guide (including the racing world’s Eric Paradis). “Austin is positioned to provide a ‘WOW’ experience without the perception of a highly scrutinized, exotic location,” says Amy Riley.

She states: The Texas city offers more than 250 live music venues and 200 restaurants within the central business district. “For planners, navigating ‘all’ the live music and entertainment options is overwhelming, and we often hear, ‘There are too many options!’ We are one of few DMOs that has its own music office tasked with hiring local talent for VIP events,” she says.

“Incentives are a growing market in Austin,” Scully adds. “We believe it’s testament to our new luxury hotel product.” Since 2017, Austin has welcomed a 1,048-room Fairmont Austin and the $75 million renovated LINE Austin as part of the city’s hottest venues, it also offers a karaoke room, boardroom, club bar and solarium bar — making it more enticing for planners.

Winning is Las Vegas

When taking an incentive trip to the Entertainment Capital of the World, there is no shortage of options to add an exclamation point to any event. According to Amy Riley, senior director of business sales, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, “Just as Las Vegas is an around-the-clock destination, it’s also an unbeatable place to bring incentive groups all year long.”

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“Incentives are a growing market in Austin,” Scully adds. “We believe it’s testament to our new luxury hotel product.” Since 2017, Austin has welcomed a 1,048-room Fairmont Austin and the $75 million renovated LINE Austin as part of the city’s hottest venues, it also offers a karaoke room, boardroom, club bar and solarium bar — making it more enticing for planners.

Winning is Las Vegas

When taking an incentive trip to the Entertainment Capital of the World, there is no shortage of options to add an exclamation point to any event. According to Amy Riley, senior director of business sales, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, “Just as Las Vegas is an around-the-clock destination, it’s also an unbeatable place to bring incentive groups all year long.”

Las Vegas averages 320 days of sun shine and less than five inches of annual rain, the weather is a perfect fit for host ing outdoor functions and events, as well as golfing, hiking and pool parties. Additionally, many newly opened or planned venues, says Scully, “The racing world’s Eric Paradis). We treat incentives as an opportunity to celebrate success of the organization while having a good time in a new place or in a common place in a new way,”

Garcia says, “Travel to farther away locations when you have world-class locations just hours from you!” Beyond the central location of the Napa region (Calistoga, St. Helena, Yountville) to this Northern California-based company, the planner adds, “It’s wine country and that, in itself, sets it apart from other regions.”

Among its numerous appeals are hot-air balloonings, skydiving, wine tastings and Napa Valley Winery Tours. Its harvest season — (its busiest season, rates are higher, and it’s more difficult to negotiate, but it provides an above-and-beyond experience). Two of the planner’s preferred locations include Harvest Inn (St. Helena) and Napa Valley Lodge (Yountville). Of practical is some of the world’s fastest Audi Sport vehicles on the nation’s only Formula 1 circuit with a pro driver as your guide (including the racing world’s Eric Paradis). “Aust

According to NYC & Company’s Cito, “Incentive planners seeking value can plan a January incentive trip, when the most affordable hotel rates of the year are available.” He mentions such options as NYC Restaurant Week, NYC Broadway Week, NYC Off-Broadway Week (offering 2-for-1 tickets) and NYC Must-See Week featuring 2-for-1 admission to museums, attractions, performing arts productions and more.

Regardless of the timing of an incentive trip, no-cost, year-round activities can be found — ranging from walking the Brooklyn Bridge or the Highline to museum visits on free-admission days. Lastly and of interest to summer-seeking, budget-minded planners, Cito adds that July and August are a second period of value when available rates are more competitive.

Fun in the Caribbean

What better incentive than the lure of the warm sun and white-sand beaches of the Mexican Caribbean? Mexico’s year-round tropical climate gives visitors the chance to relax and enjoy whenever they want.

Designing trips with incentives in mind, Hotel Xcaret Mexico is an all-inclusive resort in Riviera Maya, very close to the center of Playa del Carmen. The property has 900 rooms distributed in “Casas,” different buildings that pay special tribute to the Mayan region.

The resort offers plenty of perks, as well as the opportunity to visit the best parks in Riviera Maya and Cancun. All-Fun Inclusive by Hotel Xcaret México is the only all-inclusive concept in Riviera Maya with unlimited access to Xcaret, Xel-Há, Xplor, Xplor Fuego, Xavage, Xoximilco and Xenses parks, as well as tours to Xcaret and Xichén, food and beverages, transportation between parks and airport shuttle.

“Hotel Xcaret is the ideal destination because our All-Fun Inclusive concept grants guests complimentary access to our parks and excursions,” says Wendy Canul, groups director at Hotel Xcaret México. “That's, of course, in addition to our stunning venues located throughout our ‘caletas’ and private beaches, which offer guests the unique opportunity of interacting with nature while enjoying top-notch accommodations, service and gastronomy provided by the hotel.”

The upscale resort boasts more than 5,000 square feet of multifunctional indoor and outdoor meeting space. Other luxurious amenities include infinity pools, three gyms and 10 restaurants.

Start Spreading the News

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Jerry Cito
Senior Vice President, Convention Development
NYC & Company
New York, NY

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“The need for incentivization continues to grow, as gift cards do not offer the same motivation as trips to enviable destinations,” says Jerry Cito, senior vice president, convention development at NYC & Company, the official destination marketing organization for New York City.

Discussions in the city in terms of the time of year, the New York City special list lists the best of each season. Winter brings the exuberance of the holidays — lighting of the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree, private walking tours of decked-out department store windows and VIP views overlooking Times Square for the New Year’s Eve Ball Drop.

In spring, the city’s more than 1,700 parks, playgrounds and recreation facilities come alive with Central Park and Prospect Park becoming car-free this year. Now open are the waterfront developments of Hunter’s Point South (phase II) in Long Island City, Domino Park on the Williamsburg waterfront and Pier 3 at Brooklyn Bridge Park.

In fall, the proliferation of high-end retailers and exclusive behind-the-scenes shopping opportunities are unmatched for incentive participants with a passion for purchasing, including such perks as VIP access to the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Recognizing this city as the Big Apple of incentives is a meeting planner from a major Midwestern fraternal insurance company, where his group of 900 enjoyed a harbor dinner cruise on the Fourth of July (complete with fireworks, of course), a visit to the National September 11 Memorial & Museum and a Broadway play (if the group is large enough, a theater buyout is possible).

What is the greatest appeal of the nation’s largest city to the incentive market, especially to insurance and financial planners? Cito says, “New York City is the financial capital of the world and is home to iconic destinations, including Wall Street and the New York Stock Exchange.”

A city where everything is possible, this is an incentive destination where even functions at the UN are not off the table and zip lining in a compact city of more than 8 million is also available at the Bronx Zoo.

New York is where a planner can charter a cruise to Ellis Island for the private use of the historic terminus, arrange batting sessions with former Yankee players, coordinate VIP entry to the opening and/or closing ceremonies of the U.S. Open and watch sunrises from the rooftop of the Empire State Building.

Bottom line: It's a sky's-the-limit kind of town.

I&FMM
The Great Divide

Create Programs With Multigenerational Appeal For Attendees to Connect

By Christine Loomis

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here’s overall agreement among experts that there currently exists within company employee pools and among attendees at meetings and in incentive programs. The problem is that there has been no consensus on how to close it. Much of the discussion has previously focused on how to determine — and then cater to — each generation’s different needs. Today, that conversation is shifting. Some experts and organizations are noting that we may have gotten it wrong. Instead of focusing on differences, the means to closing the divide lies in honing in on all of the similarities that generations share, and in recognizing that defining people by their specific generation may not be productive at all. In 2015, the Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) tackled this issue in a report. As the summary pointed out, the discussion around this topic and the conclusions reached by many experts inside and outside of the meetings industry have been hampered by the fact that there is no consensus on the basic descriptions of the generations — or the stereotypes they represent — let alone anything else.

"For organizations hoping to tailor their incentive and engagement programs for employees and customers, the debate concerning the generations can be confusing and even overwhelming," the executive summary states. "Like economists, no two generational experts fully agree on the description for each generation, a truth that is well-documented both in the expert interviews conducted for and summarized in this paper, and in the dozens of papers, books and articles referenced throughout." Most importantly, the report emphasizes that in addition to the specific generation into which someone is born, there are many other factors that influence a person’s needs, preferences, interests and goals in life, work and meetings, well apart from the year they were born. Melissa Van Dyke, president of IRF, notes that since that report, meeting and incentive organizers have found many new ways to approach this topic, not the least of which is to drop the stereotypes.

Stereotyping

"What we found from a look across many different types of studies on generations is that a person’s generation is only one aspect of what influences their event experience desires," she says. "Life stage, including if they have finished school, if they are married, if they have children and how tenured they are in their current career, can oftentimes have a much greater impact on what attendees are looking for from an experience."

Jessie States, CMP, CMM, head of meeting innovation for MPI, agrees that stereotyping is not an effective approach, and as a result, the 2018 World Education Congress will have new elements in place.

"The science behind stereotyping is enlightening. That is, it’s cognitively easier for humans to place people into groups (age, for example) than to understand the complexities of each individual, especially when dealing with large numbers of people, such as attendees at a conference or tradeshow. Placing our boomers or millennials — even our centenarians — into boxes can make it easier for us to manage their expectations," States says.

"But there are challenges associated with assumptions, e.g., boomers are tech-inept and millennials can’t function without it. Not everyone or even most everyone fits into the cookie-cutter parameters that we create. And as each of our attendees, regardless of age, increasingly seeks unique, curated experiences, we may well be doing our events and participants a disservice by placing people into age-based buckets. It is for this precise reason that we have added WEC Experience Coaches this year."

Motivating Forces

Experts agree that there are many factors capable of driving human motivation, some tied to age or life stages but others to different things entirely. "People are motivated by different rewards — oftentimes unrelated to age," States says. "They may be driven or inspired by experiences (incentives), money, time off, shortened work weeks or a flexible environment. These may be driven by familial needs (young family, older parents) or career goals (title, advancement)."

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"Instead of approaching the planning process with questions of how we will accommodate a certain age cohort, we should consider all of the ways our attendees are indeed different," she says. "We’ve identified more than 30 ways our participants differ from one another, and I am sure there are many more. From culture, gender and physical ability to skill set, socio-economic status and even just event goals, there is a vast array of ways we need to create welcoming and inclusive experiences that far outweigh our preconceptions about age as a determining factor of behavior or needs. MPI is focused on creating a meeting environment where education and entertainment are well-balanced, and inclusivity and continuity to promote the importance of hosting welcoming experiences for all attendees."

Making Programs Relevant

The key here lies at least partially in determining and offering those elements that have broad cross-appeal.

A Winning Approach

Melissa Van Dyke, president of the Incentive Research Foundation, says that one approach for planners and event organizers is to focus on things that are known to be a win for all generations, such as the following:

• Acquiring goods and status that are meaningful
• Creating: Attendees do not just want knowledge. Our instinct is to immediately use the information we learn. Have attendees engage in some way to create a work of art or even complete a quiz together based on the information they just received.
• Defending: At the core, we want to know we are good at what we do. Find a way to recognize all attendees for their contributions to the event and the organization.
• Bonding: Build in calculated time for purposeful interaction. Regardless of the meeting format, find time for attendees to solve problems together and generate wins for the organization as a group.
• Creating: Attendees don’t just want knowledge. Our instinct is to immediately USE the information we learn. Have attendees engage in some way to create a work of art or even complete a quiz together based on the information they just received.
“For instance, including appropriate wellness, giveback and status com-
ponents can be well-received by all generations,” Van Dyke says. “Likewise,
engaging your attendees through mobile technology before, during and after an
event is no longer a nod to millennials; rather, it’s an important way to help all
busy attendees keep up and engage with the experience without carrying away
at a stack of paper.”

In addition, she advises planners to “create places and spaces for people of
various generations to purposefully connect. Human instinct is to gravitate
toward those who are like us. However, when done thoughtfully, through pur-
pose-built teambuilding, CSR or round-
table activities, for example, bringing different generations together to solve
current business or social issues can be the highlight of the program...for both
the business and the organization.”

That’s not to say that age is entirely irrelev-
ant. As States points out, differ-
ces in age can also mean differences in
skill set and career maturity.

“For that reason, it’s important that meeting professionals plan experiences
wherein individuals can seek best practices, advice and problem-solving
from their peers, while at the same
time, designing space for those same individuals to mentor and learn up and
down,” she says.

“Relevance comes from finding solutions to the challenges your attend-
ees face and creating behavior change that moves them forward, regardless of
age or where they are in their careers,” she adds. “Including technologies with-
in your design that create connections and
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types of solutions, but should not be
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Age, States says, “does impact move-
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much more, but so do other conditions
that are age-unrelated. So, ensuring that
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presentations include fonts that are
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for an older or younger audience ticks off
more than just the age box as you look
toward designing inclusive experiences.”

In the end, States says, her best
advice for planners is: “Host your multi-
genational programs just as you
would any meeting or event. Treat each
individual as an individual, provide a
variety of technology-based and analog
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Attendee Responsibility

Conference and incentive attendees
themselves have a lot of skin in this
game. If they work all year to qualify for
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— whether they’re a millennial or a
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How Many Generations Are We Talking About?

It’s clear that there will always be
multiple generations working and meeting together regardless of
generations than in years past be-
cause baby boomers are not leaving the
workforce.

As the IRF report noted in 2015, the
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According to the report that year, about
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largest share of the U.S. civilian work-
force. The remainder of the workforce
included about 53 million Gen Xers
(ages 35 to 50 in 2015) and about 44
million baby boomers (ages 51 to
70 that year).

There were another 4 to 5 million of
the “traditionalist” generation, meaning
those still in the workforce who were
age 71 and older. A 2015 report from Catalyst, a
global nonprofit focused on building
better workplaces for women, noted
that in 2016, a full 61.8 percent of baby
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employed, and 18.6 percent of those
age 65 and older would remain in
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Those statistics and estimates make it
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Managing Generations

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157 million people strong and growing, with four distinct generations working side by side, and “five generation set to enter in 2016.” Welcome Generation Z, those born after 1995.

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55 million millennials, (16- to 34-year-olds at that time) formed the largest share of the U.S. civilian workforce. The remainder of the workforce included about 53 million Gen Xers (ages 35 to 50 in 2015) and about 44 million baby boomers (ages 51 to 70 that year).

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Those statistics and estimates make clear that the trend of four or five distinct generations working together is likely to be the norm for many years to come, meaning meeting and incentive planners must find ways to bring all of these generations together in productive conversations and programs that increase engagement, motivation and productivity across the generational board.
T he evolution of corporate teambuilding over recent decades has made planning these activities easier. Today, there are more structured opportunities for groups that want to improve their cohesiveness. Many of them are offered by CVBs, DMCs, specialized teambuilding companies and even hoteliers. The options have gone far beyond ropes courses and bike building.

In the ‘80s and ‘90s, “no one had pages of [teambuilding] opportunities,” recalls Wayne M. Robinson, CMP, CMM, assistant vice president at FM Global and incoming FICP chair. The opportunities for corporate social responsibility (CSR) were not as robust and well-organized as they are now.

“For most DMC’s today, it’s a part of their proposals. In fact, there are companies who only manage CSR programs, and the programs are well-defined: who benefits, how the funds or materials are disseminated, not-for-profit status, as well as logistics, such as transportation, activity descriptions, what groups need to bring and so on.”

Diverse and well-structured teambuilding programs benefit planners looking to implement an activity that is both targeted to their group and easy to run. But, many programs are advantageous to entities beyond the planner and attendees. Charitable teambuilding is going strong, particularly since the recession of 2008. During that time, many insurance and financial companies added a philanthropic element to their teambuilding. Alan Ranzer, managing partner/co-founder of Impact 4 Good, describes the motivation: “If we’re going to have a meeting and show that we’re not just having a boondoggle, let’s make sure we’re doing something to make a difference at the same time.”

Thankfully, improving the public’s perception of offline meetings was not the only motivation for philanthropic teambuilding. After the economy improved, that kind of program remained a staple due to its dual benefit.

“It’s not a trend; this is something that has continued and grown ever since,” says Ranzer, who has collaborated with FCP on some of its philanthropic initiatives. “There are more and more companies like mine that are offering CSR opportunities to their clients because they are so popular.” This year, Impact 4 Good, a company that offers community service-oriented teambuilding to corporations (including several insurance and financial firms), continues to see an uptick in business.

“We’ve already done three times as many events as last year with insurance companies,” Ranzer reports. “What we’re finding is that companies really take CSR seriously. The companies that are doing it right don’t look at CSR as a check-box item for their meeting; they understand that it’s just as important as the speakers you select, the outings, the training sessions and other components.

When CSR is combined with teambuilding, the activity delivers a stronger “return on emotion” in two respects. First, participants connect more deeply with one another, compared to teambuilding that lacks a charitable aspect. “When you can do something that is going to touch you personally, and you share in that experience of changing someone’s life together with your colleagues, it creates an emotional bond in a way that non-community service teambuilding cannot,” Ranzer explains.

Second, participants connect more deeply with their company. “It endears you to your company,” he says. “There’s been so much written about employee engagement in the last five years. When you do something to give back to the community under your company’s name, you feel good about who you work for, so you’re more engaged in giving all your discretionary effort to your company. They aren’t just giving you a paycheck, but also this uplifting experience when they allow you to impact people’s lives on business time.”

When FM Global held its worldwide conference in Boca Raton, Florida, “we contacted a local charity affiliated with a religious organization,” says Robinson. “We were able to assemble packages for schoolchildren in South America. It was nice because we got an email with pictures from the kids who were happy to receive their packages.”

These returns on emotion are especially valuable when a company is undergoing challenges that can negatively affect the morale and attitude of its employees. “I’ve had clients that are coming together in times of downsizing or when major decisions have to be made, and when you use a CSR activity to kick off those events, it can really take the edge off and have people open up emotionally, which sets the tone for the time you’re together,” Ranzer relates.

An example of a firm that has achieved that greater return on emotion from CSR-oriented teambuilding is TD Ameritrade. Katrina Kent, director, The Event Group, notes that “combining teambuilding and community service has been quite successful for us and really helps meeting participants connect to a greater purpose and each other. We’ve worked with several of our core community partners, including Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross and the United Way, to customize teambuilding experiences of all shapes and sizes. Some examples include competitive ‘builds’ for Habitat in teams (which team can build the most fences or chairs and the fastest) and various tournaments with Special Olympics, as well as 5K races for charity — and our meeting participants complained.”

Kent’s team has found that “approaching organizations directly is successful because most partners are equipped and eager to work with us on the opportunity.”

Post-event, measuring the impact of the activity is often easier when teambuilding is combined with CSR. “You often have quite tangible output to measure, whether that’s X dollars raised or houses built, etc., Kent says. “You can really see and feel the impact in a powerful way.”

Balance is Key

The greater diversity of teambuilding experiences available today means that planners can be selective. More criteria comes into play, beyond the time available during the meeting for the activity. For example, planners may consider how competitive (if at all) they want the activity to be.

In Kent’s opinion, “Friendly competition juices everything up. When people are working hard for something that they care about, friendly competition makes it just a little more enticing.”

But in general, elements like competitiveness, physicality or intellectual engagement, community service, and philanthropy are key elements to consider.

By Patrick Simms

Working with charitable organizations and doing community service gives groups the opportunity to bond through philanthropic teambuilding.

MassMutual Life Insurance Company held a teambuilding event with horses at Berkshire HorseWorks’ ranch in Richmond, Massachusetts.

Delivering a ‘Return on Emotion’

"Combining teambuilding and community service ... really helps meeting participants connect to a greater purpose and each other."

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Jersey City, N.J.
challenge should only be emphasized if the participant demographics call for it.

“Balance is key,” Kent asserts. “Even when you’re doing a physical activity or something like a trivia challenge that may be geared more toward extroverts, it’s important to consider the experience for all and plan accordingly for various levels of engagement. At the end of the day, these things are great tools to bring people together, and inclusivity is key.”

Regarding the selection of the team-building’s community beneficiaries, one guideline is the group’s philanthropic history, which indicates the kind of causes that will move attendees and/or the C suite.

“Another thing to keep in mind is what’s happening locally,” says Ranzer. “We have clients that have planned or are planning to run programs in Puerto Rico; well, we all know what happened there in terms of [Hurricane Maria in 2017]. If you’re doing things in California, there (could be) wildfires. If planning in the Carolinas, (there could be another hurricane). So knowing what has happened on the ground locally is another indicator of the type of charitable activity that might be good for your group.”

Finding new activities and new causes can also spark a little more enthusiasm among participants. For instance, teambuilding through equine therapy organizations is fairly uncommon, and thus can be a big draw. In Richmond, Virginia, the 12,000-acre Beartown State Forest. Built in 1900 by Yale Professor Henry Farnum, the house is located near many cultural attractions including Tanglewood, Nor- man Rockwell Museum, The Mount and Shakespeare and Company. Groups have meeting rooms with basic AV equipment available, and PBS host and Executive Chef Carol Murko prepares all meals. Berkshire HorseWorks would hold all equine activities at Boulderwood for the client.

MountainOne Insurance Agency, Inc. has held a four-hour team-building event at Berkshire HorseWorks’ ranch for 15 high-performing salespeople.

“The primary goal was to be a reward and get them out of the office for about a half a day to do something fun,” relates Jonathan Denmark, LIA, CLTC, CISR, CLCS, president and COO of MountainOne Insurance Agency. “The second goal was to pick out some salespeople that don’t typically work with others in situations where they have to get to know each other’s style, work together to solve a problem and build a stronger team overall.”

The program actually began before the group was onsite. EAGALA-certified Hayley Summer, founder and executive director of Berkshire HorseWorks, visited MountainOne’s office a week in advance.

Denmark describes the meeting: “At that point, we had not talked the team what we were doing. She asked people questions on defining conflict and culture in your personal lives vs. your professional lives, and putting some tags to them. So, what does conflict look like? And, people said things like stress or competition. And, what does culture look like? And, people would say things like family, unity and togetherness. So, she set the stage in getting to know our team a little bit. By the end of the presentation, she was showing people pictures of horses on the screen and saying, ‘How does this horse make you feel?’ It might be sprinting or standing there in a fold.

At the ranch, the theme of emotionally connecting to horses continued.

“Hayley had laid out about 100 different pictures of horses. Everyone had to pick out a picture of a horse that represented their role at Mountain One Insurance Agency, and then describe it to the entire group,” says Denmark. “So, someone who may have been a new producer may pick out a picture of a young horse following its parents, and she would explain, ‘This is me. I’m still learning, I’m following.’ Others would pick out the black stallion [representing their role as a sales leader]. So, it was interesting that says not every client is the same, and it’s really important to match up the right person with the right client. … And, we were able to make people who wouldn’t typically be leaders, leaders in this situation.”

The second teambuilding exercise had attendees work out conflicting agendas. They were given index cards with conflicting instructions on what to do with the horses, without knowledge of one another’s agendas.

“It was just absolute chaos with 15 people trying to do different things with the horses. So, that was really interesting in having to kind of sell our agenda to one another while following the instructions on the index card,” says Denmark.

Overall, Denmark feels the equine activity “really humanized people. It broke down a lot of the thick barriers and made them a little more vulnerable. We had a session afterward where we talked about what everyone learned about themselves or others, and the feedback was absolutely incredible. I also think it helps with retention when you do something like that for your salespeople. They say, ‘This is really unique. My company and my leader really care about me. They want us to improve in these situations.”

Let the Games Begin

Unique types of CSR-oriented team-building can also be conducted at the group’s hotel or meeting venue if travel time is a factor.

Ranzer gives the example of Financial Literacy Monopoly, one of many programs designed and offered by Impact 4 Good. This particular game naturally resonates with insurance and financial groups, and benefits local high school and middle school students who also participate.

“The questions to earn Monopoly properties are all about financial literacy. Before the game starts, we bring in local kids to be on their teams. And, as they’re going through these questions, they’re actually teaching these kids what these concepts are,” Ranzer explains. “One analyst said to me: ‘It’s refreshing to do something that’s not work for us, we’ve done scavenger hunts and things that can be fun, but there’s a reason that all of us are financial analysts. To be able to forward and teach kids about these concepts really allows us to view our work in this industry in a different way.”

After the game is over, Impact 4 Good gives Kiva cards to the teams. “They go on to kiva.org and search the world over for [low-income entrepre- neurs and students] who are looking for small loans. The Kiva cards we give them have a monetary value, and as a team, they will fulfill a loan application and pick which project they want to add to their account,” says Ranzer.

The program thus goes the extra mile by teaching kids who are the com- munity beneficiaries of the activity, to be able to pay it forward. Ultimately, teambuilding that is steeped in CSR not only helps us to unify workforce.

It also indirectly helps to unify communities by promoting the value of community. Not only do community members themselves will also be achieving a “return on emotion” through good works.

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“I was just absolute chaos with 15 people trying to do different things with the horses. So, that was really interesting in having to kind of sell our agenda to one another while following the instructions on the index card,” says Denmark.
20th Annual 2018 World Class Award Winners

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS

Discover The Palm Beaches
West Palm Beach, FL

Experience Scottsdale
Scottsdale, AZ

Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau
Miami, FL

Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau
Honolulu, HI

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority
Las Vegas, NV

Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp.
Nashville, TN

San Diego Tourism Authority
San Diego, CA

San Francisco Travel Association
San Francisco, CA

Visit Austin
Austin, TX

VISIT DENVER
Denver, CO

Visit Jacksonville
Jacksonville, FL

Visit Orlando
Orlando, FL

Visit Phoenix
Phoenix, AZ

HOTELS, RESORTS & CONFERENCE CENTERS

ARIA Resort & Casino
Las Vegas, NV

Arizona Biltmore
Phoenix, AZ

Atlantis Paradise Island, The Bahamas
Paradise Island, The Bahamas

Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa
Ko Olina, HI

The Broadmoor
Colorado Springs, CO

Caesars Palace Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV

The Diplomat Beach Resort
Hollywood, FL

Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa
West Palm Beach, FL

Fontainebleau Miami Beach
Miami Beach, FL

Fort Lauderdale Marriott Harbor Beach Resort & Spa
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center
Nashville, TN

Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort
Honolulu, HI

Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa
Maui, HI

Loews Coronado Bay Resort
Coronado, CA

Loews Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Orlando
Orlando, FL

M Resort Spa Casino
Las Vegas, NV

Ocean Reef Club
Key Largo, FL

Sea Island Resort
Sea Island, GA

Trump National Doral Miami
Miami, FL

Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort
Lake Buena Vista, FL

Wynn Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV
Atlantis, Paradise Island

Atlantis, Paradise Island, the lush, oceanside resort in The Bahamas, recently embarked on a new chapter (“Bahamas at Heart”) tied to a meaningful connection with the property’s 7,300-plus employees and the rich history, art, people, food, marine life and festivities of the country.

A Refreshed and Refined Stay

Atlantis features five distinct properties at which to stay, from the iconic The Royal to The Beach and The Coral to the newly built luxury properties, The Cove and The Reef. The Coral, newly renovated, has re-opened as a fully redesigned family escape, while The Cove recently celebrated a series of new design collaborations, restaurants and guest experiences, each paying homage to Bahamian culture.

Ocean-themed Resort

The ocean-themed resort is built around Aquaventure, an innovative 141-acre waterscape of thrilling slides and river rides, pools and white-sand beaches, and features one of the largest open-air marine habitats in the world, with more than 50,000 marine animals from 250 species. In addition to various habitats across the property, guests are able to visit Dolphin Cay, the 14-acre marine mammal habitat and education center, whose first residents were rescue dolphins and sea lions from Hurricane Katrina.

A portion of the cost of each of the on-property marine interactions goes back to the Atlantis Blue Project Foundation, the resort’s nonprofit organization dedicated to saving sea species and their extraordinary habitats.

Meetings

With the largest conference center in the Caribbean, Atlantis boasts 200,000 square feet of indoor meeting space highlighted by the 50,000-square-foot Imperial Ballroom and 25,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom. The 60 meeting rooms on-property allows Atlantis to accommodate groups of 15 to 4,000 and more than 20 distinct outdoor venues totaling 300,000 square feet entertain parties of up to 5,000.

Exceptional Experiences

Atlantis is also known as one of the ultimate culinary and nightlife destinations in the Caribbean, housing a collection of more than 40 restaurants and lounges from world-renowned chefs including Nobu Matsuhisa, José Andrés and Todd English. The resort also has one of the Caribbean’s most renowned casinos, with more than 47,000 square feet of gaming options spread across the property.

Other amenities include the Atlantis Marina, Marina Village marketplace, Mandara Spa, Kids and Teen Clubs, award-winning 18-hole Tom Weiskopf-designed golf course, tennis courts and duty-free shopping complemented by some of the biggest names in the industry.

What’s Coming

Atlantis plans to announce more renovations and property upgrades in the coming months, including news of redesigned rooms and suites at The Royal & The Reef in 2019.

2018 World Class Award

Citywide Facts and Features

Guest Rooms/Suites: 3,400
Meeting Space: 500,000 square feet indoor and outdoor
Special Services & Amenities: Atlantis is your portal to a truly Bahamian experience featuring five distinct hotels, unparalleled meeting and convention space, an open-air marine habitat, a 141-acre waterscape, 5 miles of white-sand beaches and so much more.
The Diplomat Beach Resort

Fresh off a $100 million transformation in April 2017, The Diplomat Beach Resort — Conde Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards 2016 and 2017, voted one of the Top Resorts in Florida — is Hollywood, Florida’s most iconic property, boasting 1,000 guest rooms and suites. Additionally, The Diplomat is the largest in hotel convention space in South Florida with the most expansive ballroom south of Orlando.

The Diplomat Beach Resort features more than 209,000 square feet of indoor flexible function and meeting space and continues to serve as the premier location for business travel and large-scale conferences, weddings and milestone celebrations. With recent upgrades in comprehensive technology, and unbeatable ocean views, travelers and locals can expect thoughtfully designed and unique spaces meant to create memorable meetings, events and retreats.

• 50,000-square-foot unobstructed Great Hall able to accommodate up to 5,000 guests
• Four ballrooms, including 20,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom overlooking the Atlantic, able to accommodate up to 850 guests
• 39 breakout rooms, ideal for smaller events
• Outdoor special event areas, including the pool deck and South Palm Court
• Comprehensive technology and onsite IT and audiovisual

Onsite Amenities

Each of the resort’s 10 dining destinations is rooted in strong culinary sensibilities and exudes brand individuality, creating distinct spaces and experiences, from famed restaurateur and chef Michael Schulson’s award-winning Japanese-inspired MonkTAI — voted Best New Restaurant by USA Today and Sun-Sentinel, Best Hotel Restaurant by USA Today in 2017 and OpenTable’s Diners’ Choice Awards in February 2018 — to celebrity chef Geoffrey Zakarian’s Point Royal — a Coastal American restaurant.

Guests can recharge at the resort’s 24-hour fitness center, full-service spa overlooking the Atlantic Ocean or enjoy two beachfront pools. There are also 25 private waterfront cabanas, including four designed by the iconic lifestyle and fashion brand, Trina Turk. Other water activities include Jet Skiing, ocean kayaking, paddleboard rentals and the property’s newest addition, the Dip + Slide water play area.

Perfect Location

The Diplomat Beach Resort continues to serve as the largest convention hotel in South Florida and the premier location for business travel and large-scale conferences, weddings and milestone celebrations.

Located at 3555 South Ocean Drive, Hollywood, Florida, the resort is spread across the Intracoastal Waterway and Atlantic Ocean, just steps from North Miami Beach, bordering Fort Lauderdale. The Diplomat is within a 15-minute drive from the Fort Lauderdale International/Hollywood International Airport and only minutes from popular attractions like Hollywood’s historic oceanfront Broadwalk and world-class shopping at Aventura Mall, Bal Harbour Shops or Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale.

A must “sea” meeting resort off a $100 million dollar transformation, The Diplomat Beach Resort – Curio Collection by Hilton, welcomes your group and attendees to experience our newly renovated beachside destination. We mix getting down to business with just the right touches of leisure. A modern day social hub with a buzzy reputation for 10 new culinary, restaurant and bar concepts boldly led by celebrity chefs, great entertainment, great times and a menu of activities customized to groups of all sizes.

One of the most remarkable stretches of sand and sea in Florida and conveniently located just a few steps from the beautiful South Florida sleek shoreline. Rising 36 floors above a slender stretch of beach tucked between the Atlantic Ocean and Intracoastal Waterway, the 1,000 guestrooms and suites at The Diplomat Beach Resort, are designed to be comfortable retreats with sleek, sophisticated designs, contemporary furnishings and floor-to-ceiling windows and stunning views of the ocean, Intracoastal Waterway or Hollywood, Florida skyline.

• 200,000 Sq. Ft. of flexible conference & meeting space
• 10 All new dining facilities featuring celebrity chefs - Geoffrey Zakarian + Michael Schulson
• 50,000 Sq. Ft. of Exhibition Hall with no columns + 30 Ft. Ceilings
• 4 social ballrooms
• State of the Art Technology
• 39 breakouts
• Expanded beach with, spa and 24 hour fitness center
• Strategically situated between Miami Int’l Airport and Fort Lauderdale Int’l Airport
• Spectacular outdoor venues featuring oceanfront views

Citywide Facts and Features

Guest Rooms/Suites: 1,000
Meeting Space: 209,000 square feet
Special Services & Amenities: 10 culinary outlets, from casual to fine dining; water recreation: Jet Ski, ocean kayak and paddleboard rentals; poolside cabanas; full-service spa with fitness centers; onsite marina; convention center with comprehensive technology, audiovisual, onsite catering

© 2018 The Diplomat Beach Resort

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General Manager

WWW.DIPLOMATRESORT.COM | CONNECT WITH US
Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

A vibrant and dynamic global hub, Miami offers a stunning array of creative venue options for even the largest meeting needs, including the new Miami Beach Convention Center, now open!

Located in the heart of South Beach, the new Miami Beach Convention Center is a bright, glass-encased facility as innovative and tech-rich as it is beautiful. In addition to the nearly 500,000 square feet of versatile exhibition space and more than 180,000 square feet of meeting space, the new Miami Beach Convention Center includes a 60,000-square-foot grand ballroom, a 20,000-square-foot junior ballroom and 84 breakout rooms.

The space will feature a terrace where attendees can step out, mingle and soak up the city’s signature sunshine and ocean breeze. The new Miami Beach Convention Center is also environmentally friendly and LEED Silver-certified.

What’s New

Along with the new Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami continues to reinvent itself with new hotels, meeting spaces and enhanced infrastructure. Some recent additions to the city include:

• Brickell City Centre
  Spanning 9.1 acres, Brickell City Centre includes a 352-room hotel, an open-air shopping center, two luxury condo towers, two office buildings and an entertainment center.

• Brightline
  The new express train service provides intercity travel in Florida. In May, Brightline began service connecting Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, with service between Miami and Orlando to follow soon.

• Frost Science Museum
  The Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science opened its doors to the public in May 2017 at its new home in downtown Miami’s Museum Park. The 250,000-square-foot facility combines a planetarium, aquarium and science museum on one campus.

Endless Possibilities

Few places in the world deliver such a thriving mix of international sophistication, natural tropical beauty and authentic cultural diversity as Miami. From picture-perfect weather, pristine beaches and top-rated attractions, to lavish hotels, eclectic dining and a thriving cultural scene, the city offers endless possibilities for entertainment and exploration.

One of the best places to start is with the city’s diverse array of neighborhoods, where visitors are encouraged to explore the deep, rich cultural roots that make Miami such an incredible melting pot. Discover the heritage of the Caribbean in Little Haiti or the Bahamian foundations in West Coconut Grove. Immerse in the African-American experience of Historic Overtown or the region’s still-thriving Native American community in South Dade.

When it comes to arts, Miami is also a burgeoning hotbed. Stroll through the street arts district of Wynwood or visit one of the city’s Fascinating museums, such Perez Art Museum Miami or The Bass Museum of Art. Wherever you look, cultural gems await to be found.

Miami is also easy to get to, with Miami International Airport (MIA) offering more than 400 flights from around the globe daily and serving more airlines than any other airport in the U.S.

Citywide Facts and Features

- Guest Rooms: 55,394
- Hotels/Resorts: 426
- Meeting Space: 1.2 million square feet
- Special Amenities: In addition to the nearly 500,000 square feet of exhibition space and more than 180,000 square feet of meeting space, the new Miami Beach Convention Center includes a 60,000-square-foot grand ballroom, a 20,000-square-foot junior ballroom and 84 breakout rooms.

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A Modern Meeting Space That Adapts to Your Business.

With 500,000 square feet of modern, flexible exhibit space, 84 breakout rooms and a 60,000 square foot ballroom, unlimited possibilities await at the Miami Beach Convention Center. New space. New possibilities. Now open.

Learn more at MiamiMeetings.com
Meetings@MiamiMeetings.com | 800-933-8448 ext. 3071

A MODERN MEETING SPACE THAT ADAPTS TO YOUR BUSINESS.
Ocean Reef Club

Ocean Reef, a private club at the northernmost tip of Key Largo, offers beautiful, modern and functional meeting space that perfectly complements the luxury accommodations, distinctive dining and amenities that routinely wow groups who meet there.

With 30,000 square feet of meeting space, including both breakout rooms and flexible spaces, boardroom and a state-of-the-art cooking school, you’ll want to consider treating your group to this island paradise.

Preserving Nature

Ocean Reef Club is settled among one of the most beautiful, yet fragile, environments in the world — 2,500 lush tropical acres just a few miles from the most extensive living coral reef in North America. Because of its unique location, Ocean Reef not only dedicates itself to environmental preservation, but partners with organizations like the nonprofit Coral Restoration Foundation (CRF), who create offshore nurseries and restoration programs for threatened coral species.

Through this partnership, groups meeting at Ocean Reef can take snorkeling or SCUBA diving trips to the nursery and help plant coral on the reef.

TeamBuilding

Whether your team goes to see the famous Christ of the Abyss statue at the coral reef or attends the cooking school, which can hold demonstrations for up to 100 people, teambuilding at Ocean Reef Club has the feel of a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Consider the Eco-Kayak Scavenger Hunt, a very popular program among meeting attendees at Ocean Reef. Here, participants travel through mangroves and bird rookeries while admiring the clear waters that show off nature’s sea floor.

Each team is given a map, a clue to get to their next location, a card that shows them exactly what they may see, a net and guidelines to find these objects.

Planning Your Next Meeting

For meeting planners looking for a distinctive Florida Keys destination, Ocean Reef Club is like no other and less than an hour’s drive from Miami International Airport.

Aside from the many teambuilding opportunities, groups will find a variety of eclectic meeting spaces indoors and out, including Buccaneer Island, which features a saltwater lagoon, sandy beach and two oceanfront pools.

It’s the perfect setting for cocktail receptions, dinners and theme parties; 30,000 square feet of meeting space that blends contemporary comfort with advanced capabilities.

As well, Ocean Reef has the distinction of having two golf courses — a rarity in the Florida Keys — 10 tennis courts, six pickleball courts, salon and spa, myriad restaurants and lounges, and newly renovated accommodations, including oceanview rooms and suites, spacious villas and beautiful homes.

Plus, consider chartering a boat to enjoy some reef fishing a few miles offshore, where you’ll come face-to-face with almost 600 species of fish.

Contact Ocean Reef Club at www.meetingsatoceanreef.com or (800) 843-2730.
Sea Island

Steeped in golf tradition, Sea Island is home to three championship golf courses, including Seaside and Plantation, site of the PGA TOUR’s RSM Classic, hosted each fall by Davis Love III, Sea Island touring professional, two-time Ryder Cup Captain and 2017 inductee into the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Created in 1928 by Walter Travis, Sea Island was redesigned in 1998 by Rees Jones and features ocean views and plentiful lakes. Created in 1929 by Colt & Alison, Seaside was redesigned in 1999 by Tom Fazio. With 15 holes flanked by views of the ocean, sound and marsh, Seaside is Sea Island’s signature course. Retreat Course, originally designed by Joe Lee, was renovated in 2003 by Davis and Mark Love and features a unique, dramatic layout.

Golf and Lodge Enhancements

Located between Seaside and Plantation, The Lodge at Sea Island is in the midst of a $25 million enhancement program, which includes the addition of recently opened Driftwood Course, an 18-hole putting course. Six new cottages with a total of 14 sleeping rooms, an oceanfront pool and pool house, and a new casino. With four Forbes Five-Star experiences — Sea Island is the only U.S. resort to host a G-8 Summit of world leaders, Sea Island provides exceptional settings and service for conferences and executive retreats. Guest accommodations are available at The Cloister, a Mediterranean masterpiece, the Lodge, reminiscent of an English country manor, or The Inn at Sea Island. A cottage option is available at The Lodge. Sea Island offers an extensive list of activities, including golf, tennis, spa, and FAA-licensed hangar.

The Broadmoor

Nestled in the foothills below Pikes Peak on 5,000 stunning acres, The Broadmoor is the longest-running, consecutive winner of the Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star and AAA Five-Diamond awards. Here, authentic Western experiences combine with European elegance and a setting that inspires at every turn.

The Broadmoor Turns 100

To celebrate The Broadmoor’s Centennial, a fresh, new look was unveiled. The rooms and suites in the historic Broadmoor Main sport a color palate to complement those of Broadmoor West. The lobby of Main, while maintaining all its historic aspects, is now spacious. The grand staircase to the mezzanine level floats ethereally upward, unencumbered by surrounding walls, and comfortable chairs and a sofa that frame two new fireplaces.

The Golf Club celebrated the 100-year legacy of the tournaments and golfing greats that shaped the history of our storied courses. The entryway welcomes guests and members in exquisite style. The hallways are lined with cases that tell the story of how golf came to be, from course designers Donald Ross and Robert Trent Jones Sr. to the legendary professionals who called The Broadmoor home.

Even the dining experience is new and improved, with The Broadmoor Soaring Adventure zip line tour’s 10-year legacy of the tournaments and golfing greats that shaped the history of our storied courses.

The Broadmoor offers a diverse, creative culinary experience for banquet functions, all designed to please even the most discerning palate.

The Cloister, a Mediterranean masterpiece, the Lodge, reminiscent of an English country manor, or The Inn at Sea Island. A cottage option is available at The Lodge. Sea Island offers an extensive list of activities, including golf, tennis, spa, and FAA-licensed hangar.

Citywide Facts and Features

Guest Rooms: 390
Meeting Space: 40,000 square feet (interior)
Meeting Rooms: 23
Special Services & Amenities: Three championship golf courses, the county’s finest Golf Performance Center, 5 miles of private beach, Beach Club, five pools, tennis, squash, Yacht Club, Shooting School, sailing, water sports, hunting and more.

The Broadmoor

Hall to extraordinary, intimate spaces sprinkled throughout the resort, it has played host to countless conferences and special events since first opening in 1918. For a complete change of pace, groups of up to 60 can stay and meet at Cloud Camp, where 22 well-appointed lodge rooms and cabins with spectacular 360-degree vistas are complemented by the 1,500-square-foot Overlook, a fully equipped, A/V-ready meeting space.

Adventure Comes Naturally

A spirit of adventure is part of any Broadmoor experience. Set off on a nature-infused horseback ride, hiking or mountain biking trip; enjoy championship golf or luxuriate in the Forbes Five-Star spa. Experience guided fly-fishing or instruction, rock-climbing instruction and falconry; or land and take off from the mountain to the meadow with The Broadmoor Soaring Adventure zip line tour’s 10 lines and two rope and cable suspension bridges that end at the base of Seven Falls.

Tastefully Yours

With 20 restaurants, cafes and lounges, including Colorado’s only Forbes Five-Star and AAA Five-Diamond Penrose Room, The Broadmoor has a wide variety of dining options from which to choose. Herbs and vegetables are grown at Broadmoor Farms, and meats, fish and fruits come from ranchers and growers nearby.

The Broadmoor also offers a diverse, creative culinary experience for banquet functions, all designed to please even the most discerning palate.

Citywide Facts and Features

Guest Rooms/Suites: 764 rooms including 115 suites and 44 cottage rooms
Meeting Space: 185,000 square feet
Special Services & Amenities: More than 60 indoor and outdoor event venues and an award-winning audio/video system. Three mountain Wilderness Experience properties. 20 restaurants, cafes and lounges, Spa, golf, tennis, zip line, pickleball, falconry.

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OCTOBER 2018 INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT 37
Recognized a total of 251 times with Forbes Five-Star and AAA Five-Diamond awards.

For 190 years, The Broadmoor and Sea Island have provided distinctive, magnificent settings and extraordinary experiences for groups ranging from intimate board meetings to trade shows. Each resort features world-class golf, dining, spa, and outdoor adventures to enhance your event. With both of these iconic properties in a 100-year family trust, our guarantee is that while the setting will vary, the consistent quality of meetings and meticulous attention to detail never will.

We invite you to call to begin planning your next event.

**Meeting Space — Unique**

With 185,000 square feet of sophisticated event space, The Broadmoor understands the unique needs and attention required to create memorable, successful meetings. From boardrooms and Broadmoor Hall’s 60,000 square feet at the main campus to Cloud Camp’s Overlook at 9,200-foot elevation, we have the space to make your meeting memorable.

**Activities — For Everyone**

Meeting attendees can hike scenic trails, experience horseback riding and mountain biking, or archery. Broadmoor Outfitters offers expert instruction in fly fishing, falconry, zip lining and much more. Championship golf courses, and our Forbes Five-Star Spa provide rest and reward.

**Accommodations — Variety**

The 784 guest rooms, suites, cottages, brownstones, and The Broadmoor Estate House feature the elegant touches and amenities at the main campus. Provide adventure at one of the three Broadmoor Wilderness Experiences: Cloud Camp, The Ranch at Emerald Valley, and The Broadmoor Fly Fishing Camp.

Where extraordinary facilities, activities and Southern hospitality blend to create exceptional meetings. Come see why we are the only resort in the world to receive four Forbes Five Stars for ten consecutive years and the only one in the U.S. chosen to host a G8 Summit.

**Meeting Space — Flexibility**

With more than 40,000 square feet of indoor space and an island full of outdoor gathering options, Sea Island venues range from boardrooms to ballrooms, accommodating 5 to 500 people. From food and décor to technical expertise, our seasoned team brings creativity and attention to detail to every conference, executive retreat, and customized meeting.

**Activities — Variety**

Sea Island provides an extensive array of options for your meeting attendees including customized team building activities, outdoor experiences such as fishing, water sports, shooting school and falconry, a 65,000-square-foot spa and fitness center, three championship golf courses, and the nation’s finest Golf Performance Center.

**Accommodations — Choice**

Our 390 rooms and suites ensure we have a room type to meet your needs from The Cloister, nestled between the Black Banks River and the Atlantic Ocean to The Lodge, surrounded by two of our golf courses to The Inn, our select-service property. Or for those seeking outdoor adventure, we offer Broadfield, our 5,800-acre sporting club.
Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin

In 2017, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort underwent a comprehensive renovation of the Walt Disney World Dolphin lobby. This $12 million redesign was the final stage of the largest makeover in the resort’s history. The new lobby has been completely transformed into a sleek contemporary space and features new dining and beverage options, as well as more space for attendees to socialize.

“This lobby marked the final piece of an exciting transformation for the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort,” says General Manager Fred Sawyers. “This space is designed specifically to cater to today’s guests and offer an inviting place where they can come together to relax, network and grab something to eat or drink.”

The centerpiece of the new lobby is a dazzling custom crystal chandelier, which sparkles above the fountain. Other new features include an exciting new geometric ceiling, increased lighting, all-new contemporary décor and furnishings, with more than double the amount of seating.

The lobby redesign is the final stage of a $150 million project which also included the transformation of all 2,270 guest rooms, along with upgrades to the hotel’s meeting space. The renovated guest rooms feature all the latest technology, including large HD TVs and all-new upgraded furniture centered on the famous Westin Heavenly Bed. The design continues into a completely new bathroom, featuring residential-style vanities and a backlit mirror on iridescent glass tiles.

A recipient of the many prestigious meeting and other awards, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort is highly regarded for their ability to exceed expectations. Meetings are supported by an award-winning banquet, catering and culinary team that delivers customized solutions with a passion for each customer.

Whether your event is in the ballroom, on the beach, on the causeway or in one of our signature restaurants, the creative opportunities abound. For the adventurous, nothing beats a private event in the theme parks to add that magical touch while supporting your meeting theme.

The resort is recognized as a top “Foodie” destination in Orlando, featuring 17 world-class restaurants and lounges, including the famed celebrity Chef Todd English’s bluezoo, Il Mulino New York Trattoria and Shula’s Steak House, which serves the best beef money can buy.

The resort is situated in the heart of the Walt Disney World Resort, within footsteps of both Epcot, Disney’s Hollywood Studios and Disney’s Boardwalk. Complimentary transportation is provided throughout the resort, and guests enjoy the Extra Magic Hours Benefit and FASTPASS+ access. On property, guests can enjoy one of the resort’s five pools, two health clubs, tennis courts or indulge at the luxurious Balinese-inspired Mandara Spa.

The Walt Disney World Dolphin lobby has undergone a $12 million re-design, the final stage of a $150 million renovation project, the largest makeover in the resort’s history. It has completely transformed into a sleek, contemporary space featuring new food and beverage options and offer an inviting area for guests to relax or network. A recipient of the prestigious Meetings & Conventions Hall of Fame Award, the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin is a nationally respected and recognized leader in the convention resort arena. The resort offers more than 331,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, 86 meeting rooms and 2,270 guest rooms and suites which feature the Westin Heavenly® Bed. Attendees can also relax in the luxurious Mandara Spa, indulge in one of our 17 world-class restaurants and lounges or enjoy our unique Disney Differences.
When a few businessmen stood in the Nevada desert near a military base just after World War II, they saw what others didn’t see. Where others saw a hot desert with a small town and a base with dwindling post-War personnel, they saw a gleaming city rising out of the sand. Where others saw financial folly, they saw fortunes being made. Where others saw dusty, windswept streets, they saw grand hotels and bright lights.

Truth be told, they probably didn’t foresee Las Vegas becoming one of the world’s great meeting places. But there’s no disputing that title now. In 2017, there were 19,767 corporate meetings and conventions in Las Vegas, making that “folly” of a city one of the world’s great meeting destinations.

People like to meet in destinations where they can have fun after the meetings end for the day. And many planners say their meetings in Las Vegas are very productive because the attendees are happy to be there — and invigorated by the number of after-meeting options.

CAESARS FORUM, a 550,000-square-foot conference center, will have direct access to 8,500 hotel rooms at Caesars’ nearby resorts when it opens in 2020.

Las Vegas and Reno: Memorable Meetings, Natural Wonders

By Steve Winston

LAS VEGAS
The big news here is the upcoming expansion of the Las Vegas Convention Center. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority has approved a nearly $1 billion project to expand and renovate the center. That project is Phase Two of an improvement plan for the Convention Center District.

When this phase is finished at the end of 2020, it will add 1.4 million square feet to the center, 600,000 of which will be for exhibition space. Phase Three will be a total renovation of the facility, to be completed by 2023. When that phase is done, Las Vegas will have the most technologically advanced convention center in America.

The ARIA Resort & Casino has just completed its own enhancements, adding 200,000 square feet to the original 300,000 of meeting space. These spaces bring the desert inside, with native trees and plants and plenty of natural light. With 4,004 guest rooms, it can accommodate almost any group. Attendees can choose from among 16 restaurants and eight bars/lounges, and they’ll be surrounded by interesting artworks.

Caesars Palace, of course, is a longtime Las Vegas landmark, as is its casino. Its 300,000 square feet of meeting space is away from the casino, but easily accessible from anywhere in the hotel. In addition, there’s a 4,100-seat auditorium and a wonderful non-traditional space at the 4.5-acre Garden of the Gods Pool Oasis.

“IT’S DIFFICULT TO FIND THE VOLUME OF MEETING SPACE — AND, ACCORDINGLY, THE SELECTION — THAT LAS VEGAS HAS, IN ANY OTHER DESTINATION.”

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Meeting & Event Manager
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Meeting & Event Manager
Moss Adams LLP
Seattle, WA

For the Fun of It

When a few businessmen stood in the Nevada desert near a military base just after World War II, they saw what others didn’t see. Where others saw a hot desert with a small town and a base with dwindling post-War personnel, they saw a gleaming city rising out of the sand. Where others saw financial folly, they saw fortunes being made. Where others saw dusty, windswept streets, they saw grand hotels and bright lights.

Truth be told, they probably didn’t foresee Las Vegas becoming one of the world’s great meeting places. But there’s no disputing that title now. In 2017, there were 19,767 corporate meetings and conventions in Las Vegas, making that “folly” of a city one of the world’s great meeting destinations.

People like to meet in destinations where they can have fun after the meetings end for the day. And many planners say their meetings in Las Vegas are very productive because the attendees are happy to be there — and invigorated by the number of after-meeting options.

The same thing has happened to the Reno/Sparks/Lake Tahoe region to the north, once a little-known frontier outpost, but now also a great meeting destination — with both bright lights and perhaps America’s most beautiful alpine lake.

Las Vegas

The big news here is the upcoming expansion of the Las Vegas Convention Center. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority has approved a nearly $1 billion project to expand and renovate the center. That project is Phase Two of an improvement plan for the Convention Center District.

When this phase is finished at the end of 2020, it will add 1.4 million square feet to the center, 600,000 of which will be for exhibition space. Phase Three will be a total renovation of the facility, to be completed by 2023. When that phase is done, Las Vegas will have the most technologically advanced convention center in America.

The ARIA Resort & Casino has just completed its own enhancements, adding 200,000 square feet to the original 300,000 of meeting space. These spaces bring the desert inside, with native trees and plants and plenty of natural light. With 4,004 guest rooms, it can accommodate almost any group. Attendees can choose from among 16 restaurants and eight bars/lounges, and they’ll be surrounded by interesting artworks.

Caesars Palace, of course, is a longtime Las Vegas landmark, as is its casino. Its 300,000 square feet of meeting space is away from the casino, but easily accessible from anywhere in the hotel. In addition, there’s a 4,100-seat auditorium and a wonderful non-traditional space at the 4.5-acre Garden of the Gods Pool Oasis.
In July, Caesars Entertainment Corporation broke ground on **CAESARS FORUM**, a $375-million, 550,000-square-foot meetings facility tagged as “the convention center of the future.” It will be finished in 2020, with direct access to 8,500 hotel rooms at Caesars’ nearby resorts.

The **Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas** is a combination of striking modern design and luxurious accommodations. There’s great diversity in both the size and the design of the various meeting spaces here, which means there’s a configuration for every need. Ones like The Chelsea, with 40,000 square feet of attention-getting “industrial chic” design, help encourage attendees’ imaginations to run free.

Stacy Weber is meeting and event manager at Moss Adams LLP, one of the largest public accounting firms in America. She brought 800 attendees to the Cosmopolitan in June for the Annual Industry Group Conference.

“We chose Las Vegas for several reasons,” she says, “for one thing, it’s easy to get there from anywhere. For another, it’s difficult to find the volume of meeting space — and, accordingly, the selection — that Las Vegas has, in any other destination. The Cosmopolitan staff was also very helpful with the planning and onsite. I had never worked with that large a group before … but they do it quite often. This was our first paperless event; we used an app for the conference and registration was online.”

The Four Seasons Hotel Las Vegas affords attendees access to the nearby Mandalay Bay casino. At the Four Seasons, there’s 38,300 square feet of technologically advanced meeting space in 15 function rooms and on-site meeting staff to help out, if needed. Here, attendees enjoy dramatic views of the desert, world-renowned performers, a five-star spa and a steakhouse that’s considered one of America’s best.

The *Hilton Lake Las Vegas Resort & Spa* is actually in Henderson, in the Las Vegas suburbs. It looks more like it’s in Italy, though, with European architecture and pastel colors, with some guest rooms situated right over the lake. There’s 100,000 square feet of meeting space, from boardrooms to ballrooms. And this hotel is a member of Connect+, a group of Hilton hotels providing advanced meeting-planning and support services.

*M Resort Spa & Casino* is also in Henderson, with 390 guest rooms and 92,000 square feet in multiple configurations known for their great views through floor-to-ceiling windows. There’s additional space in some interesting non-traditional venues — among them the Hostile Grape Wine Cellar. Spa Mio has an excellent reputation, and it includes a state-of-the-art fitness center. The resort has eight eateries and five bars.

Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino is a favorite for big meetings because the Mandalay Bay Convention Center is one of the largest meeting facilities in America, with 2.1 million square feet. This resort is known for its shows, including Cirque du Soleil; Shark Reef Aquarium, in which you walk through a glass tunnel; a 12,000-seat Events Center and “Mandalay Bay Beach,” with real sand and cabanas. The resort’s guest rooms have recently been remodeled.

Right next to Mandalay Bay is its sister property, Delano Las Vegas, an all-suite resort. There are four floors of meeting space and 31 modern meeting rooms here, offering great flexibility in both design and functionality, and the Mandalay Bay Convention Center is available for larger groups.

The *Skyfall Lounge* offers artisan cocktails and a great view of the city, and the Delano Art Series brings striking artworks to Las Vegas. The M Resort Spa & Casino is the largest hotel in the United States, with 6,852 guest rooms. The big news is the upcoming addition of 250,000 square feet of conference space later this year, connecting to its present 600,000. Two dozen eateries run the gamut of cuisines and cultures and countries, and feature some of the world’s top chefs. There are 14 nightclubs, bars and virtual reality experiences, along with renowned entertainers. The Strip’s newest hotel/casino is Park MGM, which just opened in May, in what was once the Monte Carlo. It boasts a unique sort of urban-garden design. There are 2,700 guest rooms and 77,000 square feet of meeting space, along with an excellent spa, three pools, live shows by celebrities such as Lady Gaga, a Starbucks and a distinctive French steakhouse called Bavette’s.

Tropicana Las Vegas — a DoubleTree by Hilton has won numerous “Best of Las Vegas” honors. There’s 100,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting space, including a conference center for 2,500 people. Sitting right on the Strip, this hotel has a pool with waterfalls, a notable spa, a newly renovated casino, a nonstop run of great shows and even a beach club.

The *Mirage* has a convention center with 170,000 square feet, and every event space is on ground level for easy access. There’s a strong sustainability ethic here, and the property has won several awards for it. The resort includes a combination of striking modern design and luxurious accommodations. There’s great diversity in both the size and the design of the various meeting spaces here, which means there’s a configuration for every need. Ones like the Chelsea, with 40,000 square feet of attention-getting “industrial chic” design, help encourage attendees’ imaginations to run free.

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Linda Sinnott
Associate Director,
Meetings & Conferences
Association of International Certified Professional Accountants
Durham, NC

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There are more than 400 wines by the bottle and live music to enjoy at Hostile Grape Wine Cellar at M Resort Spa & Casino.
Siegfried & Roy’s Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat, which boasts bottlenose dolphins, white lions and tigers, and leopards. The hotel also has imaginative concepts like Yoga With the Dolphins.

At Vdara Hotel & Spa, attendees can meet in 15,500 square feet of space incorporating natural elements such as wood, sandstone and pebbles. Afterward, they can relax and refresh at the Spa, which was awarded a five-star rating by Forbes Travel Guide, and have items delivered to their rooms by robots. The hotel has 1,495 guest rooms, 14 eateries and an onsite Starbucks.

Gary McLain is vice president of Resource Management Services, Inc., a California company that produces educational conferences and networking events for the collections industry. He brought 500 people to a net event at the Palazzo, just outside of town late last year. “We’ve been staging events in Las Vegas for the past 20 years,” says McLain, “and our attendance at these meetings is always at least 10 percent higher than anywhere else we’ve been. We chose the Red Rock this time precisely because it’s not on the Strip... we wanted to keep our people together. But, wherever you are in Las Vegas, you can never really go wrong. There’s so much to see and do. If you’re looking for healthy attendance figures... this is the place to get them. And, we’re going back for the next two years.”

The Venetian and Palazzo are two luxurious adjoining towers under the same management (the Sands Corp.), and visitors to each have easy use of both facilities. Meeting facilities are in the Venetian. Between the meeting rooms, ballrooms, Sands Expo Halls and other very unique spaces, the Venetian offers a whopping 2.25 million square feet and a full production team, along with more than 30 restaurants.

Both hotels feature canals and gondola rides and Medieval Italian architecture. The Palazzo has a dozen innovative restaurants, top performers, stylish nightclubs and entertainment venues, several pools, a beach club and upscale shops.

The former Mandarin Oriental is now the Waldorf Astoria Las Vegas, and the hotel reflects the luxury and sophistication for which that nameplate is known. The 389 guest rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows, providing memorable views, and the 17,028 square feet of modern meeting spaces have huge windows letting in natural light that enhances both energy and productivity.

Away from the Strip, with a more relaxing vibe, the Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort & Spa sits, of course, on the lake. The 44,630 square feet come complete with a meetings team to handle every detail. Afterward, you might get in some golf at the Jack Nicklaus course next door, or work out in the fitness center. Later, you can “work out” any post-workout kinks at the prestigious Aveda Spa Lago.

Just one block from the Strip, the Westin Las Vegas Hotel & Spa is nonetheless an oasis of quiet luxury amid the hustle and bustle of this fascinating city. There are 826 guest rooms, as well as 29,629 square feet of bright meeting space with interesting art, along with course next door, or work out in the fitness center. Later, you can “work out” any post-workout kinks at the prestigious Aveda Spa Lago.

The Difference is in the Details

Positioned at the south end of The Strip is M Resort Spa Casino, a boutique Forbes Four-Star retreat, perfect to host your next meeting or conference. With over 92,000 square feet of open and dynamic conference space, state-of-the-art technology, impeccable service and breathtaking views, M Resort delivers a unique experience sure to impress your guests.

Meeting and event attendees will enjoy the uniquely-designed guest rooms, suites, seven signature restaurants and award-winning spa.

Customize your next meeting or conference at M Resort Spa Casino, Call 1.866.551.1540 to speak with a qualified professional from our sales team.
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The organization’s opening session was held at the Events Center and among the speakers was David Gergen of CNN. "We worked with HelmsBriscoe to negotiate with the property," Sinnott says, "and the CVA (Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority) gave us some valuable insights and information. We also use technology whenever we can. We used Event technological tools for registration, conference apps and a content management system, and the majority of our sessions were live online."

**RENO/SPOKES/TAHOE**

In a contest to name Reno’s downtown arch in 1929, a Sacramento man entered the winner — Biggest Little City in the World! This is one little city with a lot of the advantages of larger cities. It’s a place, too, with one foot in the Old West and the other in the mountains surrounding it and in the magnificent alpine lake in the middle of them. Reno, the neighboring city of Sparks, and Lake Tahoe are popular meeting destinations because they’re in the big leagues when it comes to hosting them. The destination is diverse, it boasts a colorful history, it has a wide range of meeting hotels and resorts, and it has the 600,000-square-foot Reno-Sparks Convention Center, with everything on one level. There are also 10 impressive casino-resort hotels, each between 800 and 2,000 rooms, and each with meeting space up to 200,000 square feet. In addition, most of these resorts are within minutes of the Reno-Tahoe International Airport.

Reno-Tahoe has a stunning natural landscape, offering meeting attendees an impressive range of outdoor recreation opportunities. With 365 days of sunshine, they can experience the fun year-round, whether it’s paddle-boarding in North Lake Tahoe (largest alpine lake in America) or rafting Reno’s Truckee River. Reno is also a blossoming cultural hub, evidenced by the eye-catching murals now appearing on downtown buildings. The largest meeting/convention space in all Reno casino resorts belongs to the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino with 200,000 square feet and 1,900 guest rooms. The list of amenities is just as impressive and includes a full-service spa, fitness center, mini-golf, go-karts, “skydiving” experience, bowling alley, movie theater and an indoor simulated golf course, along with great views of the mountains.

The Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa and Casino also offers spectacular views. To get to the lake, just walk outside your door. The four-star hotel has modern, airy rooms, some with fireplaces, and its 80,000 square feet includes the only lakeside ballroom in Tahoe. There’s also golf, a sporting goods shop and free shuttle to the shops and restaurants of Incline Village.

The city of Sparks boasts the Nugget Casino Resort, with an upgraded meeting space (110,000 square feet), new casino games, beautiful new lobby and a fresh “mountain-lodge” feel to the whole place. The fitness center, too, has been upgraded. There are seven award-winning restaurants and an onsite Starbucks. There’s big-name entertainment, too, with performers such as Michael Bolton, Wayne Newton and John Fogerty.

Surrounded by the mountains and lakes of Northern Nevada, Peppermill Reno Hotel Resort is an environmentally conscious hotel — and, with 1,621 guest rooms, a good one for meetings. This hotel is a mixture of modern American design and Classic European furnishings. It boasts 15 bars/lounges and 10 restaurants. The Tuscany Ballroom has 62,000 square feet, and there are two other ballrooms and several meeting spaces.

Eldorado Resort Casino draws acts such as Culture Club and the B-52s to its Reno property. It attracts meetings, too, with amenities such as its 5th-floor outdoor pool and hot tub, fitness center, upscale shops like Swarovski Crystals, a business center, fee Wi-Fi and an array of nightclubs. Nor does it hurt that Eldorado has a flexible ballroom, meeting spaces and a 25th-floor boardroom with breathtaking views. Reno also has Atlantis Casino Resort Spa, an AAA Four Diamond resort with floor-to-ceiling windows for great views of city and mountains.

Atlanta is the only resort directly attached to the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, and its own facilities include two ballrooms, 22 meeting rooms and a boardroom, all with state-of-the-art technology. With good restaurants and 10 lounges/bars, your attendees certainly won’t go hungry or thirsty.

Small wonder that Las Vegas and Reno/Sparks/Tahoe attract so many financial and insurance meetings. Planners know they’ll persuade more attendees here.

They know there’s exciting outdoor recreation available almost every day of the year. They know there are breathtaking panoramas everywhere you look. They know there are more four- and five-star and Four- and Five-Diamond resorts here than just about anywhere else in America. They know their attendees can have dinner every night in a different award-winning restaurant, followed by performances by world-famous entertainers.

They know, too, that their attendees will be genuinely excited about going to Las Vegas or Reno/Tahoe. Which means, of course, they know their meetings will be productive ones. What else could a planner ask for?

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MGM RESORTS HAS MORE CONVENTION SPACE IN LAS VEGAS THAN ALL THE CONVENTION SPACE IN MANHATTAN COMBINED.

MGM Resorts is leading the way by continuing to expand their already robust meetings and conventions footprint with innovative and collaborative spaces designed to accommodate client growth. ARIA, Park MGM, Mandalay Bay and MGM Grand will debut an additional 850,000 square feet of space, topping off their Las Vegas Citywide presence at four million square feet. MGM Resorts continues to lead the way in “meeting” expectations for groups of all sizes.

**Book your Vegas convention today. For more information, please contact Michael Dominguez at mdominguez@mgmresorts.com.**

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**OCTOBER 2018 INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT**
Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI) announced three new additions to its global sales team.

Daniel Agüero-Duplá, director of global sales, Divya Saighal, director of sales, south GSO region, and Christine Squitieri, director of sales, northeast GSO region. Most recently, Agüero-Duplá served as associate director of sales at Hotel Café Royal in London, and Saighal served as director of housing at EM2 Sports. Prior to joining ALHI, Squitieri was the national sales manager for the Ocean Edge Resort & Conference Center in Brewster, Massachusetts.

Discover The Palm Beaches has appointed Mike (“MJ”) Jackson as its new senior director, group sales. Jackson joins DTPIB with more than 20 years of experience in hospitality and sales management. Prior to this, he was a national sales manager with Destination DC.

Fontainebleau Miami Beach announces the promotion of Louis Gonzalez to director of group sales. Prior to Fontainebleau Miami Beach, Gonzalez held sales and convention operation positions at several Florida resorts.

David Schwartz has joined Haven Riviera Cancun Resort & Spa as director of group and incentive sales. Schwartz has spent more than 30 years in the incentive travel industry and has represented some of the finest hotel brands in the Caribbean and Southern U.S.

Vanessa Wilson has been named the director of sales and marketing at Hilton Washington DC National Mall. Previously, Wilson served as the director of sales and marketing at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center and the Hilton Washington, DC North Gaithersburg Hotel.

With a $40 million expansion, Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate now features new indoor and outdoor meeting space, event space, studio suites, a market-style restaurant and expanded pool areas—including Orlando’s only resort wave pool.
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A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES.

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