

INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

THE EXECUTIVE SOURCE FOR PLANNING MEETINGS & INCENTIVES

Golf Resorts

Mean Serious Business

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A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie stands with his arms crossed. He is smiling slightly. Behind him is a scenic view of a golf resort with a large, multi-story building, a golf course, and a lake, all set against a backdrop of green mountains under a clear blue sky.

Ken A. Crerar, President of The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers, holds his annual leadership forums at The Broadmoor (pictured) — the venerable Colorado Springs resort featuring three championship golf courses.

Photo courtesy of The Broadmoor



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The Sand Dollar Boardroom at Marina Inn at Grande Dunes, Myrtle Beach, SC, is 600 sf and offers a distinctive, comfortable environment for executive and small meetings.

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At Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain, exciting new venues for Scottsdale luxury dining include Praying Monk (left) and XII.



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Publisher's Message

Today Looks Bright, Tomorrow Looks Brighter

I borrowed this sunny headline from the fourth annual American Express/CFO Research Global Business & Spending Monitor, which surveyed 665 senior finance executives from the U.S., Europe, Canada, Latin America, Asia and Australia. It's but one of many positive reports to cross my desk in the last few weeks.

The survey says: "Optimism has continued to increase among the world's finance executives, with three in four (75 percent) reporting expectations for

modest to strong economic expansion over the next 12 months — up from 71 percent in 2010. In the U.S., the figure was even higher at 79 percent, although most predict modest growth."

The best news for the insurance and financial meetings business, as outlined in the survey, is that nearly 41 percent of finance executives plan to spend more on travel this year (up from 26 percent in 2010). In addition, 64 percent will spend the same or more on business travel in 2011; one in 10 expect spending to increase by 10 percent or more; and 34 percent plan to increase spending on meetings with new or potential clients.

Golf resorts also reveal an uptick in new and return business. In our cover story, "Golf Resorts Mean Serious Business" on page 18, sales directors report a return to business meetings that include golf programs: "Golf is still No. 1 with a lot of meeting planners," says Andy Radovic, vice president of sales and marketing for the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club. "Despite the austerity of the last few years, we find that meeting groups — and meeting planners — still gravitate toward golf. It's such a long tradition that it's really part of the DNA of meetings. And, in contrast to some of the outdated perceptions, we find that meetings at golf resorts are increasingly being perceived as serious business meetings...because they offer more chances for networking, and they tend to increase attendance."

Ken A. Crerar, president of The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers, who graces our cover, chooses to hold his organization's high-level leadership forums at The Broadmoor. Crerar agrees with Jack Gage, the director of insurance and incentive sales for The Broadmoor, who says, "Golf by itself is not enough to attract meetings. Most golf resorts also now have state-of-the-art meeting facilities, and staffs that are experienced in staging productive meetings. Golf resorts really understand the value of hosting business meetings."



Harvey Grotsky

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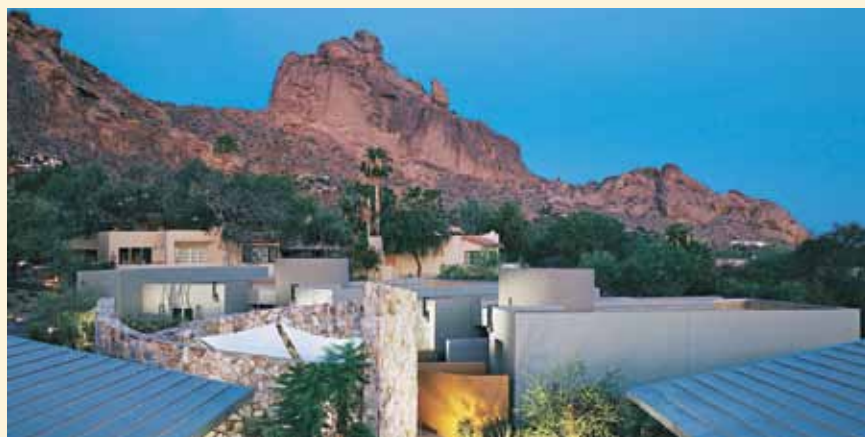
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Meeting Value Line



Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Resort & Spa, Scottsdale, AZ. The On the House promotion, available through September 14, 2011, grants meeting groups of 40 or more rooms staying for two or more consecutive nights with a complimentary private home during their event. Savings are valued at more than \$3,500 per night for Mountainside Estates homes ranging in size up to 5,500 square feet. 480-607-2350, www.sanctuaryaz.com

■ **Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, WA.** Planners are offered 5 percent off the master bill and 1/25 comp room for new meetings booked by June 30, 2011 and actualized by December 31, 2011. Summer rates start at \$129 (available through September 30, 2011); winter rates start at \$109 (available from October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011). For more information, call 509-427-7700. www.skamania.com

■ **Club Med.** Meeting groups with 20 or more adults are offered all-inclusive meeting and incentive package rates from \$119/person/night at Cancun Yucatan, Mexico; Ixtapa Pacific, Mexico; Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; Sandpiper Bay, Florida; Turquoise, Turks and Caicos; and Columbus Isle, Bahamas. Meetings must be booked by July 11, 2011 and consumed by April 30, 2012. Call 800-453-2582 or visit www.clubmedgroups.com.

■ **Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club & Lodge, Orlando, FL.** Planners are

offered a special 50th Anniversary package rate of \$173/person for groups that book a total of 50 room nights or more. Package includes two suite upgrades; waived meeting room rental and resort fees; parking, Internet, coffee and more. Attendees receive bottle of Arnold Palmer Wine, breakfast buffet and choice of round of golf or spa. Meeting must be booked in 2011 and consumed between now and January 15, 2012. Contact Roy Schindele at 407-876-8001, rschindele@bayhill.com.

■ **Rancho Valencia, an Auberge Resort, Rancho Santa Fe, CA.** Planners who book a new meeting of 40 room nights or more to operate in 2011 receive the same group rate for a group booking that takes place in the first six months of 2013. The 2013 group must be of equal or greater size and must be contracted by September 30, 2012. Contact Brooke Lazarski at 858-759-6219, blazarski@ranchovalencia.com.

Industry News

Caesars Entertainment Launches Meetings Rewards Program

LAS VEGAS, NV — Caesars Entertainment Corporation announced the launch of Total Rewards Meet-



ings & Events, the gaming industry's first-ever reward and loyalty program targeted specifically to meeting and event clients. The program allows

customers to earn Total Rewards credits for the business they bring to Caesars Entertainment properties across North America.

"We are excited to be the first company to offer a fully integrated gaming and meeting rewards program to our guests," said Michael Massari, vice president of meeting sales and operations. "Caesars Entertainment is known for providing differentiated service and innovative options to our Total Rewards members. Now we will be able to include meetings and events clients, an important part of our business, in our Total Rewards program."

Total Rewards credits may be earned for every dollar paid by the master account with no limit on the number of credits that can be earned. Total Rewards credits will be earned at the rate of one base credit for every \$1 paid by the master account. Tier credits will be earned at the rate of one tier credit for every \$5 paid by the master account. Cardholders then redeem the credits for room stays, spa treatments, dining, merchandise from the Total Rewards catalog and future meetings and events at Caesars Entertainment properties. www.totalrewards.com/meetings

Hyatt Regency Atlanta Midway Through Major Transformation

ATLANTA, GA — The Hyatt Regency Atlanta is at the halfway point in a \$65 million transformation. The 1,260-unit downtown Atlanta hotel began modernizing its Centennial Ballroom — the largest hotel ballroom in the Atlanta market — in April. That work follows months-long updates to the atrium lobby, entryway, and food and beverage concepts. Other renovations, including updates to all 737 guest rooms in the hotel's atrium tower, will begin this fall.

"The design and facilities transformation, expected to be completed in December 2011, was initiated to meet the new demands of today's group attendee," says Joe Hindsley, Hyatt Regency Atlanta's general manager and current president of the Atlanta Hotel Council. "That's why we've designed Hyatt Regency Atlanta's public spaces to be more accommodating for business and networking. We've made our check-in more intimate and user-friendly, and our new food and beverage concepts are designed to help guests work, meet and network before and after their event." Key to this strategy is Hyatt Regency Atlanta's new lobby bar Twenty-Two Storys, which provides a comfortable space for guests to work, get a bite to eat and meet with associates and clients. The hotel will remain open for business throughout the project; the transformation was strategically planned in stages as to not disrupt guests' experiences. www.hyatt.com/gallery/atlrarenovation

New Disney Hawaii Resort's First Guests Arrive in August

KO OLINA, HI — In April, in a ceremony on the lagoon fronting the site of Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa, Ko Olina, Hawaii, Disney cast members (employees) and local crew members from Hawaiian Dredging Construction Company Inc. celebrated the completion of major structural work on the Disney resort, assembling in Mickey Mouse formation on the beach.

The event was a symbolic representation of the shared efforts of Disney and Hawaiian Dredging in building the new resort. Upon completion in August, Aulani will offer 830 rooms and villas. Groups will also have access to more than 50,000 sf of ballroom, meeting and outdoor function space, including a 15,000-sf conference center. www.disneymeetings.com

Events Calendar

JUNE 15-17, 2011 FICP EDUCATION FORUM

Grand Del Mar
San Diego, CA
Contact: 312-245-1023
www.ficpnet.com

JUNE 21-23, 2011 THE AMERICAS MEETINGS & EVENTS EXHIBITION (AIBTM)

Baltimore Convention Center
Baltimore, MD
Contact: 203-840-5975
www.aibtm.com

JULY 23-26, 2011 MPI WORLD EDUCATION CONGRESS

Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, FL
Contact: 972-702-3053
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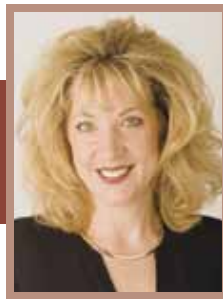
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Managing People

By Laura Stack



How to Overcome the Evils of Micromanaging

Meeting planners who work solo often depend on others in different departments to pitch in, and other meeting professionals oversee large staffs. No matter what type of arrangement you have, to be successful, you have to manage others well. Honest answers to the following questions is a good place to start.

- Do you often find yourself standing over subordinates' shoulders, directing their work?
- Do you regularly redo your employees' work, even as a form of instruction?
- Do you second-guess employees on a daily basis?
- Do you require sign-off on every task, no matter how minor?
- Are you convinced of the truth of the old saying, "If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself"?
- Do you work 12-plus hours a day, trying to put out brush fires and rechecking everything you're responsible for?
- Do you have a hard time focusing on the big picture?

If you answered "yes" to more than a couple of these questions, you've got micromanagerial tendencies, and you'll need to actively fight them. If you answered "yes" to most or all, then you are a micromanager.

So who cares? What does micromanaging hurt? Simply put, micromanaging drives a stake through the heart of employee productivity.

Most of this article is based on extensive commentaries I've received after I ran a brief tip about the evils of micromanaging in my monthly newsletter. Many said that micromanaging is as much about fear as it is about control. It's

not that the micromanager is necessarily on a power kick; it's more likely that they just mistrust everyone, and are afraid that if they don't ride their team members, everyone will make catastrophic mistakes.

The impact of micromanaging is detrimental right up and down the line, not just to individuals but to the corporate culture. Not only is it exhausting (emotionally and physically) to all involved, it's ultimately counterproductive, and it ends up driving away the best employees.

Furthermore, micromanaging is an interruptive process. If you poke people a half-dozen times a day and ask how far they've gotten on an assignment, you can't expect them to get very far; after all, they have to answer your messages, which wastes their time and drags them out of their focus.

Trust Is the Answer

When a manager surrounds him- or herself with competent, well-supported people and trusts them to do their jobs, micromanaging is never a problem. If your organization is suffering from low productivity, don't automatically blame the workers; take a look at yourself first. If you don't trust your people to do their jobs well, why is that? Did you make poor choices when you hired them, or is it that you inherited them from someone else and haven't bothered to learn how to maximize their skills and abilities?

So in ridding yourself of your micromanaging tendencies and bringing your organization up to snuff, your first task (ironically) may be to take an even closer look at your team members and their abilities. Assess how each is contributing, and what can be done to maximize those

contributions, and then develop an action plan to do whatever's necessary to train or coach that individual to increase their productivity.

As long as you delegate responsibilities appropriately, prepare employees for their jobs and provide them with everything they need to do it, you won't need to ride them. Show them that you have faith in their abilities. If they turn out to be unworthy of your faith, then yes, you'll have to bring the ax down on them. Rely upon your folks, and prove that you can be relied upon to back them to the hilt, and you'll establish a level of loyalty and productivity that can be truly astonishing.

So establish your mission and vision and make sure that it's clear to everyone. Set some basic ground rules, determine who reports to whom and how, and then turn your attention to your own tasks. If you hire capable, engaged people you can trust to do their jobs, then you've got the enviable position of being a hands-off manager. Like the savvy lieutenant, you can just point your soldiers at a task and say, "Get that done."

It's not that you're abdicating your responsibilities when you do this; you're just using other people's talents to get things done. Your function is to direct and expedite the workflow, and to provide any necessary resources to stimulate performance in any way you can.

Give your team objectives and guidance when needed (and only then), and offer them the opportunity to improve their skills to the betterment of the organization. Once trust becomes a permanent part of your methodology, your biggest obstacle will be how to clearly communicate to the individuals on your team precisely what needs to be done.

Ultimately, your true talent as a leader lies in your ability to recognize what you need to do to encourage, support and motivate your employees to achieve the results you're after — without strangling their initiative or engagement in the process. Find the right people, trust them to do their work, and check in occasionally to

Micromanaging drives a stake through the heart of employee productivity.

verify. That's how you achieve true, long-term productivity: not by standing over their shoulders, counting paperclips. **I&FMM**

Laura Stack is a personal productivity expert, author, and professional speaker who is dedicated to building high-performance SuperCompetent cultures by creating Maximum Results in Minimum Time through increased productivity. She is the president of The Productivity Pro Inc., a time management training firm specializing in productivity improvement in high-stress organizations. Since 1992, Stack has presented keynotes and seminars on improving output, lowering stress and saving time in today's workplaces. Her books include SuperCompetent (Wiley, 2010); The Exhaustion Cure (Broadway Books, 2008); Find More Time (2006); and Leave the Office Earlier (2004). Call 303-471-7401 or visit www.theproductivitypro.com to sign up for her free monthly productivity newsletter.

Small Meetings Are A BIG Priority



Photo courtesy of Tulalip Resort Casino

The Birch Room at Tulalip Resort Casino is ideal for a smaller meeting — everything from theater-style breakouts to a working luncheon or a 50-person reception.

By Derek Reveron

Small meetings are nothing to sneeze at. As large meetings are reduced in size and frequency, small meetings are growing in number and importance. “We are seeing more RFPs go through our pipeline than ever, but the size of meetings is reducing. I see this as a major trend that is going to evolve further as organizations continue to go through the pecking order of who really needs to go to meetings,” says Louann Cashill, CMP, CMM, manager of special projects for Philadelphia-based StarCite, a provider of meetings management technology solutions for corporations, including several Fortune 1000 financial services companies. About 70 percent of corporate meetings have 50 or fewer attendees, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Financial services and insurance companies, have hundreds of small meetings annually. The number of small meetings is on the rise mostly due to tighter corporate meeting bud-

gets. Corporations are shrinking the size of meetings, holding more of them closer to headquarters and regional offices, and tightening qualifications for attendance. Businesses are also holding more in-house small meetings as well as hybrid meetings, which combine face-to-face and virtual participation.

Such trends have grown due to the economic crisis and the adoption of the U.S. Treasury department’s Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), which established policies on luxury expenses for meetings, events and travel. TARP rules require corporations to create policies to identify and approve meeting expenses, and establish internal processes to track expenses and ensure accountability. TARP is one of the factors that has prompted corporations to use strategic meetings management programs (SMMP) to track, manage and consolidate spending on small meetings.

Corporations are centralizing the

financial oversight of small meetings, including some that previously have been managed by various departments, regions and professionals other than meeting planners, such as administrative assistants, says Cashill. “Since the economic crash of 2008, companies are being more strategic about what meetings take place and the number of people they send. Companies look at national meetings and say that they are somewhat impersonal, that attendees hesitate to ask questions, and that they leave unable to retain and use much of what they learned. So they slice it into maybe four regional meetings or six business-unit meetings,” says Cashill.

The Value of Small Meetings

The SMMP approach to small meetings aims to help meeting planners leverage small-meeting volume to obtain value when negotiating with hotels. That’s somewhat of a challenge these days because it’s more

of a seller’s market, according to meeting planners. However, with the number of large meetings below their all-time high numbers, hotels value small meetings as important sources of revenue.

For groups, small meetings are important because they provide intimate training, educational and networking settings. It’s also easier to focus the agenda and amenities of small meetings on the needs of the attendees.

The growing importance of small meetings is eroding the traditional perception that some properties view them as less important than large meetings. Such a perception hardly exists for small meetings held by large financial firms, says a veteran CMP for a regional office of one of the world’s largest insurance companies. “I have never felt like our small meetings have come in second to anything. We are well respected because we are national. I think most hotels recognize us as a player in the meetings

industry. It may be a small meeting right now but I might have a partner in New York that will be doing a big one. Hotels tend to look at the big picture,” says the planner.

She plans about 25 100-attendee meetings annually for a five-state region. “We do a lot of leadership and strategy meetings. Sometimes we have sales and training meetings. We have been known to have road shows where we do multiple meetings in different states,” she says.

The planner carefully monitors small meeting budgets and makes economically sound hotel choices. “With small meetings, transportation has been a large line item for us. The purpose of the meeting determines where we hold them, whether we are doing something completely business-oriented or whether we want to say to our salespeople ‘good job.’ In

“We are dealing with shorter lead times for small meetings because companies are...waiting to see what will happen...they don’t want to commit to spending money until they absolutely have to.”



Louann Cashill, CMP, CMM
Manager of Special Projects
StarCite
Philadelphia, PA

choosing a venue, we try to stay close to the airport for transportation and budget reasons. When you are not in the main area of downtown, you get a better value,” the planner says.

One property where the insurance company meeting specialist



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finds value is Tulalip Resort Casino in Tulalip, WA, where she holds a few leadership meetings each year. "They are combination business meetings as well as recognition for a job well done. We can get a good price and it's a 45-minute drive from the airport. We can hold half-day sessions during the meeting and give our upper sales people time to enjoy the hotel and go dancing," the planner notes.

The insurance company has held meetings at Tulalip for the last few years. At first, the company was concerned about the public perception of holding meetings at a casino. "But we found that the meeting area is so separated from the casino, you don't realize it's a casino. And it is geographically in an area that's convenient. They go above and beyond to help us get the meeting space the way we want it, and the staff remembers us by name. Also, the audio-visual system is top notch, and that's a huge weight off my shoulders," says the planner.

Venue Selection

Some meeting planners prefer smaller hotels for small meetings and executive retreats. Michelle Barbiero-Lisi, senior planner for Minneapolis-based Carlson Wagonlit Travel Meetings & Events North America, takes great care when selecting venues for small meetings. "Typically, we try to gauge properties that can comfortably accommodate small groups. For instance, I've never had a small group in Las Vegas. The properties are way too big. When you have a group of only 10–50 people, you need something more conducive to what their needs are. We wouldn't turn down Las Vegas if a client requests it. But we might recommend alternative locations that are smaller and not right on The Strip," says Barbiero-Lisi, who plans 40–50 small meetings annually, many of which are financial firms.

When planning executive retreats, Barbiero-Lisi typically seeks small to mid-sized properties that provide top

service. "We want a high-level, high-touch service with more onsite assistance. Depending on the level of attendees, we may have an extra person onsite to work with the hotel to prearrange, make sure everything is set up and respond to the needs of executives. When they enter a room, all they should have to do is sit down," says Barbiero-Lisi.

Providing top service and amenities for small meetings and executive retreats is certainly a priority at The Marina Inn at Grande Dunes, Myrtle Beach, SC, a premier resort tucked away amid 2,220 acres between the



Marina Inn at Grande Dunes, which is ideal for small meetings and retreats, is located in Myrtle Beach — home to 102 golf courses.

Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway. Every one of the resort's 200 guest rooms and suites provides spacious accommodations in warm, cozy surroundings, including a terrace with water views, high-speed Internet access and much more. Dining options include WaterScapes, the Marina Inn's signature restaurant, offering local, fresh sustainable dining; Reflections, Marina Inn's Lobby Bar overlooking the marina; the waterfront Anchor Café, serving up succulent burgers; and an onsite Ruth's Chris Steakhouse.

In addition to beach activities, tennis and a 126-slip marina, golf is king here as Myrtle Beach is known as America's golf capital with 10 of the top 100 courses in the U.S. Surrounded by 90 golf courses, the Marina Grande's onsite courses include the Resort Club at Grande Dunes, which overlooks the Intracoastal Waterway and was named

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the 2009 National Golf Course of the Year by the National Golf Course Association, and the Members Club at Grande Dunes, a private course with natural terrain designed by Nick Price. The Golf Academy at Grande Dunes features golf instruction and clinics from top golf professionals.

The resort offers 15,000 sf of meeting space that accommodates up to 400 guests, eight rooms including two

conference rooms and an executive boardroom. The oceanfront Ocean Club at Grande Dunes can handle up to 250 attendees, and the Private Member's Club at Grande Dunes will accommodate up to 125 participants. Conveniently located, Myrtle Beach International Airport is just 10 minutes north of the Marina Inn, and is serviced by 10 airlines and more than 20 direct flights.

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Small Meeting Specialists

The trend nowadays is for all sizes of hotels and resorts to market themselves as small meeting specialists. For example, Las Vegas' emphasis on small meetings represents a shift over the years. Cashill says, "Several years ago, if you didn't have at least hundreds of room nights, they weren't as interested in talking to you. Now, the hotels have teams of sales managers that are focused on booking small meetings business. Technology has made it much easier for huge properties to respond to RFPs for small groups. Ten or 15 years ago, they just couldn't reply to all the calls and faxes."

Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI) last year launched the "ALHI U-200 Gems" collection, which is a new speciality segment consisting of ALHI members with 200 rooms or under that specialize in serving meeting and incentive programs.

David Gabri, president and CEO of ALHI, says, "We created the 'U-200 Gems' collection so that meeting planners and incentive/ recognition specialists who are seeking an exclusive, smaller venue for their specific programs can easily access the range of options available to them. These gems can provide a wonderful secluded atmosphere for your group, which can be particularly appealing if you have a very tight-knit group, one that requires privacy or total confidentiality, or one that wishes to utilize the property's beautiful public spaces for private functions. These hotels and resorts also enable smaller groups to be the 'main program' at their property, which can have its benefits too."

Some hotel brands have dedicated websites for small meetings. Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, for example, says small business meetings are a big priority and encourages meeting planners to submit RFPs online for individual and multiple small meetings.

The Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa in Honolulu permits online one-stop shopping for room blocks for meetings of five to 25 at-



After the business meeting, attendees relax at Omni Orlando at ChampionsGate's beautiful pool areas — from private cabanas to fun and frolic on the Lazy River.

tendees. Planners can select meeting venues, order food and beverage and reserve audio-visual equipment online. Planners can also create a Web page showcasing meeting agendas. The hotel offers more than 150,000 sf of meeting space and 2,860 guest rooms.

Other resorts that cater to small meetings include the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, located in Grapevine, TX. Small, executive-sized meetings account for most of

in Santa Fe, NM, located less than a block from historic Santa Fe Plaza's museums and restaurants, offers 56 rooms and meeting space for up to 50 attendees. The property's Santa Clara meeting room is designed to meet the needs of small meetings and executive retreats. The hotel also features a theater-style venue that accommodates 40 people.

The 720-room Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate, which offers

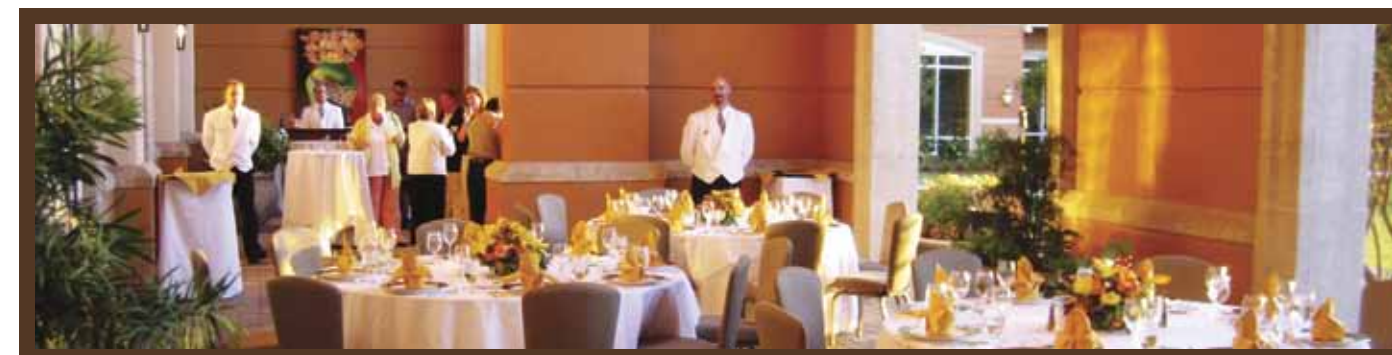
the property's group bookings. While the Gaylord Texan offers 1,511 guest rooms and more than 400,000 sf of meeting space, the property also offers small groups a dedicated meeting manager to assist with logistical preplanning needs, and a conference coordinator to meet onsite needs.

70,000 sf of meeting space and 33 meeting rooms, is a popular resort for small groups and executive retreats. The resort has two ballrooms, a full business center and high-speed Internet access and Wi-Fi in all meeting spaces and public areas.

The property boasts 36 holes of Greg Norman-designed golf, a par-3 nine-hole course and the world headquarters of the David Leadbetter Golf Academy. The ChampionsGate Golf Club, an impressive clubhouse, restaurant and banquet facility, handles golf tournaments year-round.

The full-service European-style Serenity Spa offers an array of treatments and services. Dining options include several fine eateries such as David's Club, an upscale sports bar, an Italian restaurant and Zen, which offers Pan-Asian gourmet fare.

Several pools and an 850-foot Lazy River with rapids and splash surprises provide fun for attendees and their families. The luxury resort received



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the *Orlando Business Journal's* 2009 Reader's Choice Award for "Best Meeting Spot for Small Gatherings."

Another gem suited for small to mid-sized meetings is the 826-room Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa, offering a tranquil retreat from The Las Vegas Strip's non-stop action a block away. Relaxation comes at The Hibiscus Spa, the outdoor heated pool and the WestinWorkout gym. The hotel has 20,000 sf of meeting space including 15 meeting rooms and two ballrooms. A 2,000-sf theater with stage offers seating for 175.

When It's Time to Negotiate

Small-meeting deals are available for those who know how to negoti-



The Westin Casuarina Hotel Casino & Spa, located one block from The Las Vegas Strip, features ideal meeting rooms for small events.

ate with properties, but there are three things to keep in mind, according to meeting planners: Hotels typically hesitate to book small meetings several months in advance, although that is starting to change. It's a challenge for hotels to find space amid more profitable large meetings. And more corporations are waiting until the last minute to book meetings. "Generally, we are dealing with shorter lead times for small meetings because companies are kind of hanging back and waiting to see what will happen in their industry, and they don't want to commit to spending money until they absolutely have to," says Cashill.

She offers the following advice on dealing with short lead times for small

meetings. "They are good opportunities for planners to hone in on booking hotels that have gaps between large meetings or conventions and take advantage of some of the concessions that might be offered to fill that space. The trick there is flexibility. Ask the group if its dates are flexible. The first response is typically "no," but if you talk further and let them know that if they are flexible you can probably find something in the location within budget, then they start to come around," Cashill advises.

In order to maximize negotiating clout, corporations and planners must track aggregate spending on small meetings. "In the past, nobody was tracking it. Nobody ever really looked at how many businesses had small meetings and what the total spending was and how much revenue they were giving to hoteliers. Part of negotiating means knowing exactly how much small meeting business you are actually giving a specific client," says Barbiero-Lisi. She uses Carlson Wagonlit's in-house tools to track the spending of small business clients and negotiate with industry suppliers. "I have one client that has been running the same small meeting for five years now. I have all the statistics on those meetings, including spend and what they got from each property they've used," says Barbiero-Lisi.

Groups that hold several small meetings a year have a better chance of getting at least some concessions. However, don't expect deals similar to those offered to large meetings, says Cashill. "In terms of attrition, they won't give you as large of a slide. For a large meeting they might give 20 percent. For a small meeting, they might give 10 percent, but you try to settle at 15. With small meetings, especially with a short lead time like 30 days or less, a hotel may give you more leeway on cancellations," she says.

Other contract clauses are more difficult to negotiate. "With large meetings, you can get a clause that says the hotel

can't start major renovation six months prior to the meeting. With small meetings, it's basically a few weeks. In terms of force majeure, sometimes you have a little more leverage in terms of how to define it in large contracts because people are coming from so many different places and countries. With small meetings, you don't have that advantage," Cashill adds.

Points to Remember

Meeting planners offer the following tips when it comes to planning and negotiating small meetings and executive retreats:

- Target properties that received good feedback from attendees during previous small meetings. Also consider hotels that are part of the company's corporate travel program.
- If possible, book small meetings during slower periods — typically Monday through Thursday. Book meetings during seasonally slow periods, which vary according to the destination.
- For executive retreats, ask for complimentary upgrades to suites for VIPs, especially if the meeting occurs during the middle of the week.
- Attempt to include a clause that provides credit for cancellations. It's easier for companies to cancel the smallest of small meetings.
- Keep in mind that many properties hope that hosting a large corporation's small meetings will help them eventually attract its larger meetings.
- Consider second- and third-tier destinations, properties outside the downtown and popular resort areas. "They can be less expensive because the hotels are more willing to negotiate for small meetings," says Barbiero-Lisi.

Small meetings are important revenue sources for hotels and valuable resources for attendees. Let's hope this is one trend born from the recession that grows stronger as the economy improves.

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Golf Resorts

Mean Serious Business

By Steve Winston



The famed Ocean Course at Kiawah Island Golf Resort.

Photo courtesy of Kiawah Island Golf Resort

Meetings at golf resorts, on the critical list only a year or two ago, have emerged from the recent economic trauma with a reinvigorated presence.

Insurance and financial meetings at golf resorts are no longer considered merely “fun” getaways. For one thing, golf meetings generally attract more attendees. For another, they tend to enhance productivity at the meeting, because attendees know they’re going to have a break later in the day. In addition, they’re seen by employees — who have been spending the past few years working harder and longer than ever before — as a sign of appreciation by the company.

Insurance and financial planners believe these meetings also help alleviate burn-out, so that attendees may return to their jobs re-energized and reinvigorated.

Throughout all the recent

changes in the meetings industry, one thing hasn’t changed. Many business-people still see a golf course as a good place to conduct business. To network. To exchange best practices. To generate fresh new thinking. And to encourage people to speak more freely than they might in a standard meeting format.

Golf resorts that are equipped to

host meetings that include a golf program are dotted all over the country. Here is a sampling of some of the best from coast to coast.

The Sea and the South

Situated in a beautiful slice of the South Carolina Low Country, Kiawah Island Golf Resort exudes a distinct Old South charm, and yet, at the same time, a serious business face. There are 255 guest rooms in the Five Star, Five Diamond Sanctuary, constructed in the style of an old plantation home, and almost every one of them faces the ocean. There are also 450 villas (one to four bedrooms) and 90 luxurious private homes. There’s 35,000 sf of space for meetings here, as well, and that doesn’t include the beautiful outdoor terraces and lawns, or Mingle Point, which can accommodate 1,000 people for a Low Country Oyster Roast over-



Photo courtesy of Scottsdale CVB

The Scottsdale area is replete with championship golf courses such as The Boulders Club, which features two courses considered the most demanding and beautiful in the Southwest.

looking the Kiawah River. In addition, there are 11 restaurants, ranging from Italian to Low Country seafood.

Kiawah Island has five championship golf courses, designed by luminaries such as Tom Fazio, Pete Dye and Jack Nicklaus. Kiawah has hosted on The Ocean Course the 2007 Senior PGA, the 1991 Ryder Cup, two World Cups, the 2001 UBS Cup and the 2005 PGA Professional National Championship. In 2012, Kiawah Island Golf Resort will host the 94th PGA Championship, only the fourth golf course to host each of the PGA of America’s major championships. *Golf World* readers selected Kiawah Island Golf Resort as the No. 1 public golf resort in the magazine’s “2010 Golf World Readers’ Choice Awards.”

Bonnie Gaugler, senior meeting and event planner for Philadelphia-based Harleysville Insurance, one of the top 60 property/casualty insurance groups in America, recently brought a group of 65 people to Kiawah Island Golf Resort for the Annual National Agents Advisory Council.

“Kiawah’s (The Sanctuary) only about six years old,” she says, “and it was designed with very modern meeting spaces. Meetings are actually enhanced by Old South ambience. For example, we had a very successful breakfast meeting outside by the pool. In contrast to more traditional breakfast spaces, where everyone bolts for the door as soon as they’re finished, our attendees stayed around longer to talk and to network. And that enabled us to segue seamlessly into the scheduled meetings.”

Gaugler says her company’s golf pairings are never random. She makes sure there’s a senior manager in every foursome, because it builds better relationships.

“Golf has always been a big business-driver,” Gaugler says. “But it’s just a part of the package. I usually know within 15 minutes of walking into a property whether or not it will work for us. But it didn’t even take me that long with Kiawah. I knew as soon as I walked in that this was a place that specializes in serious business meetings.”

The Broadmoor Sets the Standard

In Colorado Springs, the legendary Broadmoor maintains its stellar reputation for service and amenities. The iconic resort has received the Forbes (formerly Mobil) Travel Guide Five Star Award for a record consecutive 50 years. Its Penrose Restaurant and The Spa at The Broadmoor are five-star rated as well.

The resort is evocative of the grand old hotels of Europe, with 700 rooms and suites, 44 cottage guest rooms, and 24 retail shops. Meeting spaces are a wonderful blend of technological advancement and creative comfort. The Colorado Conference Center offers 185,000 sf for meetings, in 60 rooms; its Broadmoor Hall can accommodate 650 people and 350 booths. After the meetings, attendees have their pick of 18 restaurants, cafés and lounges.

Golf has been paramount at The Broadmoor since master golf course architect Donald Ross designed the original Broadmoor Golf Club, which



Ken A. Crerar, President
The Council of
Insurance Agents & Brokers
Washington, DC

“The Broadmoor provides exceptional service, professional meeting space and a unique opportunity for our meeting attendees to...build new relationships.”

opened with the hotel in 1918. Today, the famed East Course, the West Course and the Mountain Course, a Jack Nicklaus design, offer golf at its best under the shadow of Cheyenne Mountain. The best female golfers in the world will join honorary chair Annika Sorenstam as they compete for the U.S. Women's Open title on the East Course in July.

Jack Gage, director of insurance and incentive sales for The Broadmoor, says that insurance and financial groups are finding increased value when they meet at golf resorts — because the golf course often serves as an extension of the boardroom or meeting hall.

“But golf by itself is not enough to attract meetings,” he says. “Most golf resorts also now have state-of-the-art meeting facilities, and staffs that are experienced in staging



Photo courtesy of The Broadmoor

The Broadmoor features three championship golf courses: Donald Ross designed the original Broadmoor Golf Club — now the East Course — which opened with the hotel in 1918. The West and then the Nicklaus-designed Mountain Course followed.

productive meetings. Golf resorts really understand the value of hosting business meetings.”

The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers brings 400 to 800 attendees to The Broadmoor twice a year for the organization's leadership forums. Ken A. Crerar, president of The Council, notes, “The Broadmoor provides exceptional service, professional meeting space and a unique opportunity for our meeting attendees to network with other attendees and build new relationships — during business hours and while relaxing on the golf course. Simple, excellent setting. Excellent service. Incredible golf.”

The discriminating industry leaders and executives who attend the forums expect no less, and they expect a productive environment in which to accomplish business goals by meeting's end. Paula Karchner, vice president of meetings for The Council, explains, “The objective of our meetings is to bring together industry leaders to discuss current and prospective industry issues, and how any potential changes and/or challenges may yield opportunities for each attendee's specific area of expertise. We strive to provide our attendees exceptional opportunities to expand their business networks and improve their bottom lines.

“The companies that attend our meetings run their own individual meetings and events under the umbrella of our overall event,” Karchner continues. “We max out all meeting and function rooms during our time at The Broadmoor, with different types of programs occurring simultaneously. In a post-meeting survey of attendees following our fall meeting last year, an overwhelming 98 percent said they accomplished their business goals at the meeting. We work hard to ensure that our attendees successfully meet their objectives at our meetings, and we take pride in statistics like that.”

For a meeting planner, The Broadmoor's level of service is “priceless,” Karchner adds. “No other hotel can match the level of service that The Broadmoor provides. Whether you are attending a meeting, playing a round of golf or enjoying a social visit, you cannot help but appreciate how well The Broadmoor staff runs each and every facet of their business.”

As a result, The Council has just signed another five-year contract with the resort. “We have hosted four meetings at The Broadmoor over the past two years,” Karchner concludes, “and we are looking forward to continuing our partnership with The Broadmoor for years to come.”

Lucky in Las Vegas

Las Vegas, of course, has always been known for both meetings and golf. Both can be experienced at Wynn Las Vegas and The Encore, sister properties under the stewardship of renowned hotelier Steve Wynn. The Wynn Las Vegas has 2,716 guest rooms and 200,000 sf for meetings, and The Encore has 2,034 guest rooms and 60,000 sf of meeting space. Both hotels boast meeting spaces with sophisticated technology, floor-to-ceiling windows, and great views as well as private Meeting Concierges, who will provide personalized onsite support.

Both properties feature a variety of upscale dining, shopping and entertainment options — with the excitement of The Strip right outside the door. In addition, ownership is spending some \$250 million on upgrades and renovations. Guest rooms in the Wynn Las Vegas have already been refurbished and the refreshing

of Encore, which has not marked its third birthday, is next. Not only that, Wynn and Encore boast more Forbes Five Star awards than any other casino resort in the world.

The Wynn Golf Club championship course was designed by Tom Fazio and Steve Wynn, with dramatic elevations in the heart of The Strip, along with waterfalls, streams and forest. This course is hallowed ground, as it's played host to 50 years of championship PGA and LPGA events.

“There are few better places than a golf course to get to know your colleagues or your clients,” says Chris Flatt, executive vice president of hotel sales and marketing at Wynn Las Vegas. “And you can also learn a lot about a person by the way they play, whether they display patience or integrity. It's always been a great way to build business relationships.”

Flatt says meetings at golf resorts seemed something of an endangered



Photos courtesy of Wynn Las Vegas

The only golf course on The Las Vegas Strip, Wynn Golf Club, designed by Tom Fazio and Steve Wynn, boasts a storied 60-year history (originally The Desert Inn) and a waterfall on the 18th hole.



Photo courtesy of Turtle Bay Resort

Turtle Bay Resort, located on the north shore of Oahu, HI, features a number of oceanside holes along the Arnold Palmer and George Fazio golf courses.

species during the depths of the recession, but are now making a comeback, because companies are seeing the benefits.

“Golf resorts offer a unique opportunity for meeting planners,” Flatt says, “because the courses are right on the premise. You don't have to transport people offsite. And there's so much to do that they'll never want to leave, anyway.”

Flatt learned the game because she recognized how much business is conducted on golf courses.

“I took it up because of the business I'm in,” she says. “What a great way to get to know people...and what they require in a meeting.”

Aloha Meetings

On the North Shore of the island of Oahu, Mike Wilkins, director of sales and marketing at Turtle Bay Resort, reports record-breaking attendance, especially for its insurance and financial sector meetings.

“Meetings in Hawaii just seem to generate better attendance,” says Wilkins. “People who've never been here always want to come. And people who have been here always want to come back.”

The 900-acre resort features 400 hotel rooms, 40 beachfront cottages, 25 villas as well as the newly refreshed 28,000-sf Pacific Rim Conference Center. A Benchmark



Photo courtesy of Reunion Resort

Reunion Resort, near Orlando, FL, features Signature Design championship golf courses by Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson and Arnold Palmer — three of golf's greatest legends.

Hospitality property, Turtle Bay Resort has a fine reputation for quality service and productive meetings.

Most of the meeting rooms boast breathtaking water views — whale sightings included at no extra charge. Because the temperature rarely varies more than 4–5 degrees, planners also have the option of holding events outdoors. The resort is experiencing a boost in meetings not only from Pacific Rim clients, but also from groups that are adding golf programs back into their events.

Turtle Bay Resort features two championship golf courses that rank among the top courses in Hawaii. The Arnold Palmer and George Fazio courses have hosted prestigious PGA Champions Tour and LPGA tournaments.

“We all know how hard it’s been the past few years — particularly for insurance and financial meeting planners,” Wilkins says. “Holding your meeting at a golf resort says to your people, ‘We appreciate what you do. And if you do the job you’re supposed to do, and meet the goals you’re supposed to meet, we’re going to reward you.’”

The CEO/president of a large financial services company held three meetings at Turtle Bay Resort over the past couple of years, each with about 250 attendees.

“We had three objectives for our meetings,” he says. “One was recognition for business goals achieved. The second was to express appreciation for the spouses and signifi-

cant others who had to put up with our people’s long hours. And the third was training and education. And we found that holding our meetings at a golf resort accomplished all three.”

He believes it’s important to create extraordinary experiences to show your appreciation for your team and their spouses, and that the Hawaii experience

is clearly extraordinary. And he adds that, if your only concern is doing meetings “on the cheap,” you won’t get production out of people who have given up so much of their personal lives to work.

“I’ve found,” he says, “that a meeting at a golf resort is an incredible motivator to our people. It’s just plain good business. We establish goals in advance, and we tell our people that if the goals are met, then our meeting will be held in a special place. It motivates people to achieve their goals. And the more you can reinforce the achievement of goals, the better off you are.

“Golf course resorts,” he adds, “are unique business-drivers.”

Golf Goes With Florida

Two premier golf resorts that mean serious business can be found in Florida: Reunion Resort in the Orlando area and Ponte Vedra Inn & Club near Jacksonville.

Even though Reunion Resort is in the heart of the world’s largest group of attractions, it’s a place of peaceful, beautiful grounds, away from the crowds. Meeting planners can avail themselves of 25,000 sf of meeting space — an ideal size for insurance or financial company meetings. Attendees will enjoy their stay in one of the 350 luxurious villas and single-family homes, or the crown jewel of the resort — the Reunion Grande, which features luxurious one- and two-bedroom Estate Villas.

Reunion Resort is the only place with Signature Design courses by three of golf’s greatest legends: Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson and Arnold Palmer. In addition, the resort is also home to the only Annika Academy in the world, run by LPGA star Annika Sorenstam. And there are 10 pools, the Spa at Reunion Resort, a water park and several restaurants. Planners (and attendees) also like the no-cash, no-tipping, all-inclusive policy here; it makes budgeting a lot easier.

Lynette Owens is president of



Photo courtesy of Omni Orlando at ChampionsGate

The World Headquarters for the David Leadbetter Golf Academy, located at Omni Orlando at ChampionsGate, includes a 4-acre practice area ideal for groups of all sizes.

Lynette Owens & Associates, a meeting-planning firm in Rancho Santa Fe, CA. She’s held three meetings for insurance company clients at Reunion in the past few months. She believes that if you’re going to play golf at your meeting, your meeting should be held at a golf resort.

“When you go offsite to play golf,” she says, “there are all kinds of logistics involved in moving your group. The courses are not necessarily championship caliber. And there are any number of things that can go wrong. Golfers don’t want long drives or bad box lunches.”

She, too, notes that meetings at golf resorts tend to spark larger attendance.

“I think people are more likely to attend these meetings, as opposed to meetings in cities,” Owens says. “Golf resorts don’t only offer golf; there’s a wide array of things to do after your meeting.

“And if perception is a problem,” she adds, “you can always schedule the golf for the days before or after the meeting starts.”

Just south of Jacksonville, FL, planners can choose The Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, with 250 guest rooms and 17,000 sf of meeting space, or The Ponte Vedra Lodge & Beach Club, with 66 guest rooms and 6,000 sf of meeting space. The signature restaurant is the Seahorse Grille, with dramatic views overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

The renowned Ocean Golf Course has been around since the Inn & Club was founded in 1928, and is

reminiscent of a “Golden Era” course. The Lagoon Course winds through lagoons and old oak trees, and has water hazards on 12 different holes.

“Golf is still No. 1 with a lot of meeting planners,” says Andy Radovic, vice president of sales and marketing for the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club and The Lodge & Club. “Despite the austerity of the last few years, we find that meeting groups

— and meeting planners — still gravitate toward golf. It’s such a long tradition that it’s really part of the DNA of meetings. And, in contrast to some of the outdated perceptions, we find that meetings at golf resorts are increasingly being perceived as serious business meetings... because they offer more chances for networking, and they tend to increase attendance.” **I&FMM**

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Smooth Sailing



Photo courtesy of Royal Caribbean International

Royal Caribbean International's newest ship *Allure of the Seas* at anchor in Nassau, The Bahamas.

All-Inclusive Cruise Meetings Keep Budgets On an Even Keel

By John Buchanan

There weren't many bright spots on the meetings industry horizon last year. But one of them was the cruise industry and its increasing popularity and almost endless array of ships, itineraries and experiences for corporate groups. While hotel bookings were still down, cruise meeting business was up — at the tail end of one of the worst economic slumps in more than 75 years — according to a report earlier this year from travel researchers PhoCusWright.

A reflection on the growing trend, for the first time ever in March, major cruise lines — Royal Caribbean International, Costa Cruises, Silversea Cruises and MSC Cruises — participated in the Gulf Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings Exhibition (GIBTM) in Abu Dhabi.

Says GIBTM's Exhibition Manager Lloyd Kenyon, meeting planners should now think of major cruise ships as "floating conference centers, com-

plete with state-of-the-art auditoriums and meeting rooms."

And despite a still-common notion that there are only a handful of major cruise operators, the roster of options is almost endless today.

"There are as many kinds of cruise ship experiences as there are hotel experiences," says Joyce Landry, CEO of Coral Gables, FL-based Landry & Kling Cruise Event Services, a 30-year-old pioneer in the use of cruise ships for meetings. In effect, the company functions like a DMC for the high seas, Landry says.

John Diulus, managing director, strategic partnerships, charters, meetings and incentives at Carnival Cruise Lines in Miami says that in addition to an ever-increasing variety of itineraries, cruises also offer another key benefit to meeting groups. "The most obvious benefit that a cruise presents,

compared to a land-based resort, is value," he says.

Landry agrees. "A cruise offers a lot of amenities and activities that are included in the per-person cost," she says. "Once everybody is onboard, everything is included. And that typically includes meeting space, as well as AV and other meeting services. And because of the all-inclusive pricing, planners also save on things like spouse programs, because there are lots of things to do, like go to the spa or a lecture on art."

Value and Convenience

David Nelson, vice president of travel, meetings and incentives at Aflac in Columbus, GA, has used cruise meetings every few years for two decades. He concurs that the ability to save money on a cruise is a specific lure for some programs. "Cost is always at the forefront as a factor," says Nelson, who oversees 200 meetings a year. "We always measure things on a cost-per-per-

son basis that includes transportation, accommodations, food and beverage, entertainment and activities. And generally speaking, a cruise ship charter — particularly if you can actually fill the entire ship — on a per-person basis is a better value than a land-based program. And that's primarily because your food and beverage, entertainment, activities and meeting services are all built in. And we find both value and convenience in that. In most land-based programs, you have to pull all those elements in from various sources."

Patricia Kerr, CMP, director, distribution and sales support, at Manulife Financial in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, used her first cruise a decade ago. She has used full-charter cruises three times since, and in 2013 will host a Mediterranean cruise, aboard *Celebrity Solstice*, for approximately 1,400 incentive program qualifiers. She agrees that bottom-line cost savings is the most alluring aspect of a cruise meeting. However, she finds motivational value, too.

"We look for experiences that provide a motivational incentive that will drive sales," says Kerr, who plans more than 300 meetings a year with her team.

The meetings that take place on cruise ships are also better attended, says Nelson. "When you plan a business session or have a speaker or host a seminar, you hope people will actually attend," he says. "And on a cruise ship, out in the middle of the ocean, you have the benefit of a truly captive audience."

Staging the meeting is easier on a ship, too, says Landry. "For example, if you're in a hotel and you want to bring entertainment into a ballroom and create staging and décor, you have to scramble to do all of those things," she says. "On a ship, it's there because of the built-in infrastructure they have for their own entertainment. So, you don't have to do anything."

Kerr values the extraordinary range of dining and entertainment options on a cruise ship. "One thing that is particularly important to us at Manulife is allowing people to choose what they

want to do and when they want to do it," she says. "A cruise gives our attendees that kind of choice. And that plethora of options is something that we consistently see noted in our post-conference reviews."

The value proposition offered by cruising has allowed Kerr to upgrade. "For our incentive programs, we like to bring in a certain caliber of entertainment for our gala night," she says. "And any planner will tell you that name entertainment can get very costly. When we use a cruise program, we take the money we have saved over a land-based program and apply it toward our entertainment thereby increasing the value of the entertainment we're achieving on the same total budget." For a fairly large program, she says, that increment of reinvestment — in a direct comparison to a like-sized land-based program — can result in a \$600,000 entertainment budget instead of the usual \$400,000 because she saved \$200,000 on basic costs upfront.

Charters and More Choices

Regardless of group size, the best way to optimize a cruise meeting is to do a full-ship charter, advises Landry. "A charter just takes the cruise meeting experience to the next level," she says. "It takes something that is already very experiential and unique and makes it exclusive. On a charter, the planner can work with the cruise line to work on every detail, from the food to the entertainment. The entire ship becomes your customized environment for that particular meeting."

At the same time, she says, the menu of choices — all offering some kind of exotic destination and experience — grows every year now. "Because there are so many new ships," Landry says, "the cruise lines are really experimenting with itineraries as they try to spread them around. So they're now doing shorter itineraries in more places. And that's great news for meeting planners because it gives them a lot more options."

And those increased options include an ever-expanding list of U.S.

Insider Tips

Barry Maher, a Corona, CA-based speaker, has worked cruise meetings for the past 15 years. His clients include AT&T, Budget Rent-A-Car and Hewlett-Packard. He has seen a particular uptick in cruise bookings over the last 12–18 months. He's also observed some common pitfalls that can challenge a meeting planner not versed in the differences between a cruise ship and a hotel.

Pay careful attention to the meeting space. "Planners need to question the cruise line in detail about the meeting facilities and services available on the ship," Maher says. "The newer ships have great meeting space, but most of the older ships do not. If possible, once you know what's available, you should lock in your meeting space before the cruise. Onboard, cruise directors will sometimes move a scheduled meeting to a less desirable location — sometimes in a spot where pedestrian foot traffic will be passing by during your meeting. I've seen meeting sessions done in hallways, bars, dining rooms, and in giant theaters that dwarf the tiny group of meeting participants. The key to success is detailed homework and planning."

Keep attendees focused on the meeting. "If the scenery outside the meeting room windows is more compelling than the content of the meeting session, a good set of blinds can be your most important piece of equipment," says Maher. "If the content is highly technical and boring, and it just goes on and on, there are just too many easy diversions on a cruise ship, and you're going to lose your audience."

Understand that you will not be a priority with the cruise director. "Cruise directors are great," says Maher. "They're really extraordinary at what they do. But they also have a million things going on every minute. So it's important to make sure you've worked everything out with your sales rep before you ever get on the ship."

— JB

cruise ports, says Dwain Wall, senior vice president of Fort Lauderdale, FL-headquartered Cruise One, a large cruise travel agency and meeting consultant with 700 offices across the U.S. “Logistically, cruises are a lot easier for meeting planners to do today,” Wall says. “That’s because there are cruises out of so many places — New York, New Jersey, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Virginia Beach, Charleston, Jacksonville, Port Canaveral, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Tampa, Galveston, San Diego, Seattle — on and on. That makes things very convenient for meeting planners and attendees.”

Just as hotel brands now cater to a carefully targeted demographic, so do cruise lines. For example, explains Landry, Carnival ships are geared toward an active, slightly younger audience that wants to do a lot of things — day and night. “It’s the equivalent of a trip to Las Vegas, because there is a lot of stimulation, especially at night,” she says. On the other hand, Royal Caribbean has created a more laid-back ‘family’ ambience.

Smaller Luxury Lines

Meanwhile, smaller luxury lines have carved out their own niche. **Regent Seven Seas Cruises’** luxurious six-star ships are sized right for incentive groups, with capacities ranging from 490 to 700 passengers. The staterooms are all oceanview suites, most of which offer balconies, and there is an onboard Canyon Ranch Spa. Regent Seven Seas recently was voted “world’s best cruise line” by *Condé Nast Traveler* readers. The Regent Seven Seas fleet of all-suite vessels — Voyager, Mariner and Navigator — are undergoing a multiphase, multimillion-dollar enhancement program dubbed the “Seven Seas Signature” initiative.

Windstar Cruises’ three luxury motor sail yachts accommodate from 148 to 312 passengers, ideally suited for charter, with the ability to explore

the smaller ports in the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Europe.

Seabourn features a five-ship, ultra-luxury fleet with capacities from 208 to 450 passengers. In June, it will launch its sixth ship, the Seabourn Quest. Tanya Barnette, the company’s Chicago-based director of business development, says, “One advantage of a small-ship line like Seabourn is that we’re able to get into smaller ports that large ships can’t get into,” Barnette says. “For example, we offer a Balkans cruise from Copenhagen to Stockholm that includes St. Petersburg, Russia. And we



Joyce Landry, CEO

Landry & Kling Cruise Event Services, Fort Lauderdale, FL

“Because there are so many new ships, the cruise lines are really experimenting with itineraries. ...So they’re now doing shorter itineraries in more places. And that’s great news for meeting planners.”

go right up the Neva River, to the city center. You can’t do that on a big ship. We also go to other interesting small ports like Portofino and Sardinia.”

Lindblad Expeditions offers a cruise to the Galapagos Islands. “It’s more of an ‘adventure’ experience that planners use as a form of teambuilding because it’s so unique,” says Landry. “I went on it last year and it was fantastic.”

Another smaller, more exotic choice that Landry likes is Miami-based French cruise operator **Compagnie du Ponant**. “They have a fleet of beautiful ships in Europe that do itineraries like the Mediterranean,” Landry says. “And they have very specialized itineraries that go into small ports and even harbors.”

Viking River Cruises offers scenic cruising along the rivers of Europe, Russia, China, Southeast Asia and Egypt. Viking is undergoing a major fleet expansion of 10 new ships in three years.

More Cruise News

Meanwhile, new ships continue to launch from the major cruise lines. The

latest from **Norwegian Cruise Line** is the Epic. “It has fantastic entertainment onboard that includes a production of Blue Man Group and a Cirque du Soleil show,” says Landry. Blue Man Group performs in the 685-seat Epic Theater, and the Cirque Dreams and Dinner in the Spiegel Tent venue can be reserved for groups. The 4,100-passenger Epic also accommodates smaller incentive groups in its luxury Villas suite complex, comprising 60 suites and villas on two private decks at the top of the ship. NCL has two 4,000-passenger vessels on order for delivery in spring 2013 and spring 2014.

Royal Caribbean International’s (RCI) newest ship, the 5,400-passenger Allure of the Seas — sister ship to the equally mega-sized Oasis of the Seas — launched last December. It spans 16 decks and features seven themed neighborhoods including Central Park, Boardwalk, the Royal Promenade. DreamWorks Animation provides onboard entertainment spectacles such as a water acrobatic show in the open-air AquaTheater. The Allure also features the first at-sea Broadway production of “Chicago: The Musical.”

RCI recently announced that it will build a new class of ships under the “Project Sunshine” code name. The first, a 4,100-passenger ship, is slated for delivery in 2014. Said Richard D. Fain, chairman and CEO of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., “Project Sunshine builds on the best ideas of our existing ships and adds exciting new activities and entertainment concepts.”

In May, **Carnival Cruise Lines**, which now has 23 ships and operates out of more U.S. ports than any other line, debuted its new Carnival Magic.

The 3,600-passenger ship also is the 100th ship in the Carnival Corporation’s family of cruise brands. The Magic’s sister ship, Carnival Breeze, will make its debut in June 2012.

Also in 2012, **Crystal Cruises**, an acclaimed luxury line, will go all-inclusive aboard its Crystal Symphony and Crystal Serenity with fine wines and premium spirits.

Disney Cruise Line launched the 4,000-passenger Disney Dream in January, sailing from Port Canaveral, FL, to the Bahamas and Disney’s private island Castaway Cay. Its sister ship, the Disney Fantasy, is scheduled to launch in 2012.

Celebrity Cruises welcomes its fourth Solstice Class ship in July, when the 2,886-passenger Celebrity Silhouette is officially named in Hamburg, Germany. Beginning this November, Celebrity Silhouette will be the first Solstice Class ship to present cruises from Cape Liberty (Bayonne), New Jersey, within the greater New York City area.

Essential Considerations

For planners new to cruise meetings, the most important factor is “knowing that you’re picking the right vessel,” says Landry. “No two cruise lines are alike, and within individual cruise lines, no two ships are alike. You have to do your homework. For example, you

have to make sure that the ship has exactly the meeting space you need.”

To help with that homework, Landry & Kling Cruise Event Services offers *Seasite.com*, an online portal for the cruise meeting



Patricia Kerr, CMP, Director, Distribution, Sales Support
Manulife Financial, Canadian Division, Waterloo, ON

“One thing that is particularly important to us at Manulife is allowing people to choose what they want to do and when they want to do it. A cruise gives our attendees that kind of choice.”

and incentive market that delivers comprehensive information on every cruise line and ship. Planners can submit RFPs directly to cruise lines via Seasite and get direct responses. Planners also can receive consulting services from Landry & Kling, as well as cruise-specialist agencies such as Cruise One.

Such expert consultation is crucial, say Kerr and Nelson. “I’ve been in the meeting business a long time,” says Kerr, who has worked with Landry & Kling for more than 10 years. “And I learned very early on that the cruise business and the hotel business are two truly different entities, with different nuances. And while my team and I might be booking 300 meetings at 300 different hotels every year, we only book five cruises over a 10-year period. So there’s no way as an organiza-

tion that we could have the experience that they (Landry & Kling) do. So, to mitigate risk and ensure that we are realizing the best value for our dollar, we decided back at the beginning to work with someone whose specific ex-

pertise was the cruise market. And we looked at a number of organizations before we selected Landry & Kling as our cruise partner.”

Nelson has collaborated with Landry & Kling for 20 years. “Planning a cruise meeting is different from planning a land-based meeting,” Nelson says. “The terminology is different. The contracts that have to be executed are different from a hotel contract, especially in the force majeure provision. So, as a planner, you need someone who has the expertise and experience to address those kinds of issues.”

Nelson recently has become a fan of Seasite, too. “I use it to see who has new ships and who’s going where. If I’m interested in researching a cruise in Europe, for example, I don’t have to go to every cruise line’s website to find out who’s got what. Everything is right there at Seasite.”

Landry says planners who have had to scale back during the recession are looking for ways to deliver the traditional wow factor for less. “Some planners are cutting out entertainment, while others are putting out fewer shrimp and hoping no one will notice,” she says. “But when you do a cruise, you can give attendees that feeling of pre-recession abundance again. You can make them feel pampered again because there’s no scrimping going on. On a ship, you can give attendees a great experience. And you can do it at a lower cost.”

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Top 10 Ships for Meetings

Cruise meeting and incentive specialist Landry & Kling recently released their picks for the top 10 ships for meetings in 2011–2013:

- **SeaDream II** — SeaDream Yacht Club
- **Liberty of the Seas** — Royal Caribbean
- **Celebrity Millennium** — Celebrity Cruises
- **Silver Spirit** — Silversea Cruises
- **Pride of America** — Norwegian Cruise Line
- **Seven Seas Navigator** — Regent Seven Seas
- **MSC Splendida** — MSC Cruises
- **Allure of the Seas** — Royal Caribbean International
- **Carnival Dream** — Carnival Cruise Lines
- **National Geographic Endeavor** — Lindblad Expeditions

A slideshow is available at www.landrykling.com.



Photo courtesy of Scottsdale CVB

ARIZONA A Meetings Oasis

By Stella Johnson

You would be hard-pressed to find another state that matches Arizona's extraordinary sense of place. It distinguishes itself with a spectacular and divergent mix of scenery and environments, from alpine forests to desert cactus, from the Grand Canyon to Camelback Mountain, and from crimson sunsets over ancient red rock formations to bright lights in revitalized cities.

Arizona has a sense of purpose, too, in exceeding expectations of meeting

and incentive groups. Although it's been reported that convention and meetings business has suffered greatly in recent years, like everywhere else, meeting planners who book any of Arizona's legendary resorts and hotels are reporting greater value and flexibility than they find in other destinations. They are also experiencing an extremely high standard of service and professionalism.

Supporting evidence can be found in monthly reports produced by the

Arizona Tourism Office (ATO). For instance, according to the ATO's Lodging Accommodations Report for March 2011, the occupancy rate was up by 3 percent this year over 2010 throughout the state, with demand for rooms up by 4.1 percent and supply of rooms up by 1 percent. Year-to-date data reveals occupancy up by 5.8 percent, demand 6.7 percent and supply up by .09 percent.

As charmed as Arizona might seem, it is not without its trials, from the tragic shooting of U.S. Congresswoman Gabby Giffords in Tucson earlier this year to the controversial immigration bill, aimed at identifying, prosecuting and deporting illegal immigrants. Attacked on many fronts, the bill was blocked by a lower court — a ruling that recently was upheld by a federal appeals court. The bill's bad press burdened local economies with business losses running into millions of dollars.

But like the proverbial Phoenix rising from the ashes, the ever-resilient state looks forward to celebrating its upcoming Centennial (1912–2012). Starting in September of this year

and climaxing in February 14, 2012, the date that marks Arizona's official 100th year of statehood, there will be national, regional, state and local observances with "signature projects, events and promotions to appreciate our state's rich past, celebrate the present and together create a vibrant and sustainable future," posts the Centennial Advisory Council.

Expect much enthusiasm that will not be curbed as Arizona ushers in a whole new era in meetings and hospitality.

"My operations counterpart and I plan all of our meetings to exceed our team members' expectations by booking and creating just the right atmosphere for our events."

**Paul Folkert, Area V.P.
Gentiva
Atlanta, GA**

short walk from the convention center, is the right kind of atmosphere for smaller groups with modest needs for conference space.

Larger groups find a fit at the expanded Marriott, which now claims as much as 240,000 sf of its own indoor/outdoor meeting space, and a recent makeover of all guest rooms, suites and corridors, adorned with a new array of colors to match the property's unique desert surroundings.

But small groups find a great fit in Phoenix, too, something to which Paul Folkert can testify. As area vice president for Rehab Without Walls, a division of Gentiva, a home health-care insurance provider headquartered in Atlanta, GA, Folkert says, "My operations counterpart and I plan all of our meetings to exceed our team members' expectations by booking and creating just the right atmosphere for our events. The last time we met in Phoenix was very recent, in February (2011)."

The Clarendon Hotel in downtown Phoenix was selected for the intimate meeting of about 20 executives. Its meeting and event facilities include a boardroom, several meeting rooms and a rooftop SkyDeck. "Our first goal is to make sure we show our leadership team that we appreciate their dedication, passion and commitment to the company. The second goal is to improve team and individual skills in an effective execution of strategies to achieve key goals," he says.

The Clarendon provided the Gentiva group with great rates, super service and an immediate response

to any special needs. There were a number of freebies, and new meeting chairs proved extremely comfortable for three days of meetings.

But the hotel also scored on other counts as well. "The Clarendon is locally owned, so they buy local, organic produce for their restaurant. In fact, everything is so fresh, we joke that they don't even need a freezer," says Folkert. "In addition, it has a wonderful rooftop venue with great views of the city, and rooms are of the same quality as other places in town that charge much higher rates but with less value. It's also independently owned and fuels the local economy which means a lot to us as a way of giving back to the community."

Fresh off a three-year makeover, Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort is a mountainside Spanish-Mediterranean haven in Phoenix, offering 563 suites and 48,000 sf of flexible meeting and event space. Attendees can enjoy championship golf at nearby sister property Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs Resort's Lookout Mountain Golf Club. More R&R is available at Squaw Peak's Tocasierra Spa & Salon and Hole-in-the-Wall River Ranch, with more than three acres of waterslides, pools, spas and a lazy river.

Twenty minutes from downtown



Photo courtesy of JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort & Spa

JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort & Spa in Tucson features the Audubon-certified, 27-hole Arnold Palmer Signature golf facility, 575 guest rooms and 88,000 sf of meeting space including the 20,000-sf Arizona Ballroom.

Talking Stick Resort's Orange Sky venue on the rooftop offers panoramic views of stunning desert landscape.



Photo courtesy of Talking Stick Resort

Phoenix is the historic resort The Wigwam, which opened for business in 1929. The 440-acre, Litchfield Park property recently completed a multimillion-dollar renovation project, which refreshed its 331 rooms and added a new outdoor event plaza, and new lobby and reception area. The Wigwam has 100,000 sf of indoor/outdoor meeting space and Sunset Point, a signature venue for groups.

Located in Greater Phoenix is the 600-square-mile Gila River Indian Community, which consists of two tribes that form Gila River Gaming Enterprises, a three-casino empire. One of them, Wild Horse Pass Hotel and Casino, was recently awarded the prestigious AAA Four Diamond rating, and also received the "Best Casino in Arizona" kudos. Located in Chandler, just 15 minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, the 242-room property touts that it offers "Las Vegas entertainment but without the crowds."

Wild Horse Pass offers approximately 12,000 sf of meeting space, as well as the 1,400-seat Ovation LIVE! Showroom, which can be reserved for group events. Amenities include a 100,000-sf casino, retail shops, an outdoor pool with cabanas, a health club and the Whirlwind Golf Club at Wild Horse Pass, which features 36 holes of Troon-managed championship golf. There are eight dining options including Arizona's first Shula's All American Steak House, four lounges including Encore with live music, plus the "high energy" AiRIA Night Club.

Scottsdale

Scottsdale's downtown area has recently experienced a multimillion-dollar renaissance and is increasingly popular with visitors for its blend of Old West and contemporary design, as well as its eclectic mix of art galleries, nightclubs, shops and restaurants. Three of the newest restaurants are Citizen Public House, Big Earl's and Mabel on Main, a speakeasy-style establishment with a private dining room for small groups.

More recent highlights include the waterfront and Southbridge. Newly christened, the Scottsdale Waterfront along the Arizona Canal now includes everything



Jesse Slome
Executive Director
AALTCI
West Lake Village, CA

from residences to retail shops, restaurants to recreation, art plazas to public event space and even an amphitheater. Southbridge is a pedestrian-friendly entertainment district that meanders along the south bank of the canal providing additional opportunities for

shopping independently owned shops and dining at some of the city's top establishments, one of which, The Chef's Loft, hosts a culinary school with classes headed by national chefs.

Among the new and newsworthy items in Scottsdale's resorts and hotels is the Talking Stick Resort. Only a year old, Talking Stick is already the talk of the town, especially with its recently achieved AAA Four Diamond award. Located amidst the art and culture of the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian community, the sprawling resort has 497 accommodations, a 13,000-sf open-air spa on the 14th floor and 240,000-sf casino that is separately located from the building's 100,000-sf of indoor/outdoor meeting and conference space, which includes the 25,000-sf Salt River Grand Ballroom. Meetings on the green take place next door at Talking Stick Golf Club, managed by Troon Golf.

Of its five restaurants and lounges, Orange Sky offers the ultimate dining experience, not just because of its fine steak-and-seafood menu but also because it is on the top floor (15th). That means dazzling panoramic views of the McDowell Mountains by day and exquisite sunsets at day's end. Onsite entertainment is offered in the 750-seat Showroom featuring top performers.

Just across the expressway from the resort is the new Salt River Fields at Talking Stick, the spring training home of the Colorado Rockies and Arizona Diamondbacks baseball teams. The facility offers event space year-round for up to 400 people.

The 53-acre Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Resort and Spa, overlooking Paradise Valley, completed a \$3 million renovation last year that included new décor, new venues and more. For instance, "elements," headed by chef and Food Network star Beau MacMillan, features a new

high-tech kitchen and innovative menu with locally sourced foods. And XII is a new private dining room with views of a working kitchen. There are 105 luxury casitas, seven mountainside estates and 9,000 sf of indoor/outdoor meeting space, which features floor-to-ceiling windows. The Views is a 3,500-sf venue with a panoramic vista of Mummy Mountain; and Praying Monk is a new all-weather patio with retractable glass walls.

Meanwhile, the golfing experience at The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa is above par with its three nine-hole championship golf courses, covered driving range and climate-controlled golf carts. The 732-room resort, which also features the Agave Spa and a 9,000-sf adventure water park, is in close proximity to Kierland Commons for upscale retail shopping and Scottsdale Quarter for more shopping, dining and nightlife.

Onsite is approximately 183,000 sf of indoor/outdoor meeting space,

eight dining establishments, and courtyards and event space for themed parties such as cowboy cookouts and Western-style barbecues.

First-Class Bureau

"I believe the meeting experience in Scottsdale begins when one first contacts the Scottsdale CVB," says Jesse Slome, who was formerly a director of marketing at Transamerica and a general manager at Aetna. He now is executive director for three insurance trade organizations — including the American Association for Long-Term Care Insurance — that focus on Medicare supplement and critical illness insurance, and long-term care insurance. He is responsible for site selection and planning of all the details of an event, "from promotion to program," he adds.

"We hold conferences across the United States and no other bureau comes anywhere close to their commitment to bringing business to the

city. We recognize that even our larger events are small in comparison to other groups, but we never felt that way when working with the staff at the Scottsdale CVB. That rarely happens with other bureaus who often seem suited to just forwarding requests for quotes to their participating members. Scottsdale's staff really takes the time to understand our unique needs and then tries to match those needs with suitable partners. I would assume they do this for everyone."

Slome, author of numerous articles and books on various insurance and financial topics, says that the three organizations each run conferences that range in size from 200 to as many as 700 attendees, from CEOs to independent brokers.

"For the money, nothing beats Scottsdale, and the conference committee chose to have this meeting in Scottsdale for the second year in a row," states Slome. "We look less for special incentives and more for value

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and flexibility. The Scottsdale hotels allowed us to contract for a smaller than anticipated number of attendees with room to grow. Since we were flexible with meeting dates, they were able to offer highly competitive room rates."

From his perspective, the goal was to find an outstanding venue that would work within set limits and parameters. "That is, we needed a hotel that would provide meeting space in excess of what the initial room block guarantee might permit, along with the ability to grow our block," he says. "In terms of room rate, while a low-cost room often means a low-quality facility or poor service, both times in Scottsdale we were able to secure highly attractive rates with very high levels of quality and service," says Slome.

Return to FireSky

Travel and Convention Coordinator Jennifer Meyer says the insurance company she works for, RWAM Insurance Administrators, schedules three divisions, each with one main convention per year, and each with about 100 attendees. "My job is to find the location or sell it to the CEO. Then, I do all the negotiating and handling of contracts, plan all aspects of the convention and, finally, assist in hosting the convention."

Meyer has used FireSky Resort and Spa in Scottsdale repeatedly, with the most recent visit taking place a little over a year ago. It was an incentive trip primarily for insurance brokers, with management and guests in attendance. "It was the best one yet!" she enthuses.

For offsite venues, the group used The Boulder House. "An incredible property," she adds, "with interior and exterior walls actually built from granite boulders." According to Fort McDowell Adventures, an outdoor activities and event venues company representing the Sonoran Adventure Center and several unique facilities



The AAA Four Diamond Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino in Chandler has garnered "Best Casino in Arizona" honors.

Bordered by a national park, a state park and a 3 million-acre reservation called the Tohono-Oodham Nation (home to Desert Diamond Casino), Tucson is easy to access, with the international airport situated just minutes from downtown. Tucson's also home to a growing number of hotels and resorts, including the new Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain with 253 accommodations, 44,000 sf of in-

door/outdoor meeting space and two championship golf courses.

And, late this year, the Casino Del Sol Resort, Spa & Conference Center will make its debut as the city's newest casino property. It will offer 215 rooms, approximately 65,000 sf of meeting space and an outdoor concert venue with 5,000 seats, among other features and highlights.

Established meeting-friendly Tucson resorts include Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort & Spa and the Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort.

Unique venues for offsite events are plentiful and one of the most popular is the Arizona Historical Society, located on the edge of Papago Park. The facility is available to groups of all types and sizes, from small conferences to exhibitions, as well as trade shows and corporate training retreats.

Parting Words

Will Rogers once said, "The trip across Arizona is just one oasis after another. You can throw just about anything out and it will grow there." Meeting planners know that if they "plant" a meeting in Arizona, it will grow in more ways than one, too, with energy, ideas and productivity. Or, as Jesse Slome states, there isn't any one particular highlight when meeting in Arizona, but rather a series of pleasurable experiences like "smelling the dew while listening to a keynote address; and the evening receptions at an Arizona sunset."

I&FMM

including The Boulder House, the architectural masterpiece was purchased by Fort McDowell in 2005 and is now utilized as a high-end group dining venue.

Finally, don't leave town without checking out the 40-acre Scottsdale Plaza Resort "located in the midst of a golfer's paradise." Renowned for its high level of service to corporate groups, The Scottsdale Plaza offers 404 rooms and suites and 30,000 sf of meeting space. Amenities include pools and tennis courts, a salon and day spa, a fitness center and more. Nearby are a wide range of area attractions including the Arizona Science Center, Ballet Arizona, the Challenger Space Center and Kierland Commons, among many other points of interest.

Tucson

The Tucson CVB has always been on top of its game with aggressive and innovative marketing campaigns to fuel its meetings and hospitality trade. So much so, that they garnered the prestigious "Best Idea Award" at the 2010 Western Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus Annual Conference held in Salt Lake City, UT, last October.

The Tucson CVB was recognized for its current \$30,000 sales incentive program, which offers groups that book meetings for three consecutive years credits of from \$1,000-\$30,000 to the master account depending upon the number of peak room nights.

Photo courtesy of Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino

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The Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, National Harbor, MD, has named **Michael Snapkoski** as vice president of sales and **Jim Hipp** as director of sales. Snapkoski most recently served as the hotel's director of sales. Hipp previously served as director of sales for the Canyons Resort, Park City, UT.

The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort, Orlando, FL, has named **Jared McLachlan** as director of sales. He formerly served as the director of operations for Riverwalk Jacksonville Development, Jacksonville, FL.

Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa, Rancho Mirage, CA, has named **Ty Brassie** as director of sales and marketing. He most recently served as director of sales and marketing for Riviera Palm Springs, Palm Springs, CA.

Javaud Mushtaq was named director of sales for Loews Coronado Bay, San Diego, CA. He was previously director of national accounts for Loews Coronado Bay.

One&Only Pamilla, Los Cabos, Mexico, has named **Cristina Romero-Peri** as executive director of sales and marketing, based in the Los Angeles sales

office. She most recently served as regional director of sales and marketing in Mexico for Capella Hotels and Resorts.

Visit Jacksonville, Jacksonville, FL, has named **Dennis Tracy** as senior vice president, destination sales and marketing. He most recently served as director of sales and marketing for the Little Rock (AR) Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Conrad Miami, Miami, FL, has named **Philippe Thevenet** as director of sales and marketing. He was director of sales and marketing at the Conrad Indianapolis in Indiana.

The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO, has named **Rori Coombs** as director of national sales responsible for the Southeast and Northeast regions. She most recently worked as a meeting planner for the Northeastern Association of Equine Practitioners, Lockport, NY.

Mark Peterson was promoted to senior sales manager at Beau Rivage, Biloxi, MS. He formerly served as convention sales manager.

Christine Madden has returned to the Santa Fe Convention & Visitors Bureau in her former position as di-

rector of sales after spending two years as the bureau's East Coast sales representative.

Cheyenne Mountain Resort, Colorado Springs, CO, has named **Darla Cook** as sales manager for the Southeast territory. With more than 22 years of experience in corporate sales and conference management, Cook most recently served as group sales manager for DoubleTree World Arena Hotel, Colorado Springs, CO. **I&FMM**

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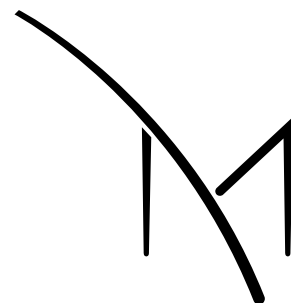
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