

A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

APRIL 2011 VOL. 29 NO. 4 \$9.00  
www.themeetingmagazines.com

# Corporate & Incentive Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS



## Las Vegas

**Energizing, Engaging Meetings  
That Make a Big Splash**

PAGE 38

**Teambuilding**

PAGE 22



**Safety & Security**

PAGE 28



**Arizona**

PAGE 32

Photo courtesy of Las Vegas News Bureau

The statues in Mount Nemrut used to belong to King Antiochus, whose kingdom was founded on happiness and salvation.

Share a Moment with history



be our guest

1 877 FOR TURKEY TURKISH CULTURE AND TOURIST OFFICE, NEW YORK

turkishairlines.com  
1 800 874 8875



goturkey.com  
OFFICIAL TOURISM PORTAL OF TURKEY  
goturkey.com

ISSN 0739-1587

USPS 716-450

# Corporate & Incentive Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

VOLUME 29 NO. 4

APRIL 2011

www.themeetingmagazines.com

Photo courtesy of Lake Placid Lodge



Page 12

## FEATURES

**12 The Big Think**  
Executive Retreats Are Making a Comeback  
By Harvey Chipkin

**18 Celebrate Your Success Story**  
Use the WOW Factor to Make the Message Stick  
By John Buchanan

**22 How to Achieve Esprit de Corps**  
Boost Morale, Productivity, and Have a Little Fun, Too  
By Stella Johnson

**28 Learn From Experience**  
To Safeguard Attendees  
By Derek Reveron



Entertainment was part of a multifaceted, three-day event in Honolulu for high achievers of a high-tech company.

## DESTINATIONS

**32 Arizona**  
Sunshine and Service Keep Groups Coming Back  
By Karen Brost

**COVER STORY**  
**38 Las Vegas**  
Energizing, Engaging Meetings That Make a Big Splash  
By John Buchanan



Outdoor event spaces at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, AZ, come with a ready-made, Catalina-Mountain backdrop.

The Buck Deck at Lake Placid Lodge provides just the right kind of away-from-it-all environment executives need for a "Big Think."

## DEPARTMENTS

**4 Publisher's Message**  
By Harvey Grotzky

**6 News Watch**

**6 Meeting Values**

**7 Industry Events Calendar**

**8 The Challenges of the New Health-Care Law**  
By Betty McNulty

**48 Worn Out at Work?**  
By Jon Gordon

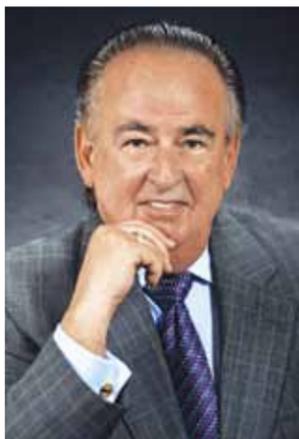
**50 People On the Move**

**51 Reader Services**

Corporate & Incentive Travel (USPS 716-450) is published monthly by Coastal Communications Corporation, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394; 561-989-0600. Single copies \$9.00 U.S.A. only. Yearly subscription price is \$90.00 in the U.S.A.; Canada and foreign is \$150.00. Back copies \$10.00 U.S.A. only. Distributed without charge to qualified personnel. Periodicals Postage Paid at Boca Raton, FL, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Corporate & Incentive Travel, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394. Nothing contained in this publication shall constitute an endorsement by Coastal Communications Corporation (Corporate & Incentive Travel), and the publication disclaims any liability with respect to the use of or reliance on any such information. The information contained in this publication is in no way to be construed as a recommendation by C&IT of any industry standard, or as a recommendation of any kind to be adopted, by or to be binding upon, any corporate/incentive travel planner or agent. Reproduction of any portion of this publication by any means is strictly forbidden. Editorial contributions must be accompanied by return postage and will be handled with reasonable care. However, the publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited photographs or manuscripts. Subscribers: Send subscription inquiries and address changes to: Circulation Department, Corporate & Incentive Travel, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394. Provide old and new addresses including zip codes. Enclose address label from most recent issue and please allow five weeks for the change to become effective. Printed in U.S.A. © 2011

## Making a Comeback

After a few years of tough times, many popular meeting destinations are making a comeback: Planners are flocking back to Arizona (page 32) and Las Vegas (page 38) and adding purposeful event entertainment (page 18) and meaningful teambuilding experiences (page



22) back into the meeting mix. Moreover, executive retreats (page 12) have come out of hiding, albeit with greater regard for ROI and less opulence. Also, despite deep budget cuts, attention to attendee safety and security (page 28) is on the rise as well.

"Things are good" says Chris Meyer, CEM, CMP, vice president of sales at the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority (LVCVA) who describes Las Vegas's comeback as being in "full-blown recovery mode." Meyer predicted that 2011 would be a good year, and he was correct. He notes, "corporate business is up significantly. Our

trade shows have been seeing double-digit increases in attendance. Show floors are growing in size."

Planners like Christine Rosa, NYC-based executive director of event marketing and talent relations for *Sports Illustrated* and *Golf Digest* magazines agree. She stages the global launch event of *SI's* annual swimwear issue each February in Las Vegas because, among many other attributes, "There's just so much opportunity in Las Vegas to do things. As a destination, it has the sun, the golf courses, the fine dining."

Jake Leinenkugel, the president of the Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company, celebrates his company's success in style in Scottsdale, AZ. Every March, the "Head Beer Dude" brings his top 100 salespeople and their spouses to The Scottsdale Plaza Resort for business meetings and fun in the sun. The No. 1 reason he brings the program back to The Scottsdale Plaza each year is the people: "Their service level is just exceptional. They've gotten to know what our needs are, and they overdeliver in almost all cases."

As David Gabri, president and CEO of ALHI, succinctly reminds us in "The Big Think: Executive Retreats Are Making a Comeback," "Business is back, and people are back to the business of business. That means they are over dealing with a crisis and need to look to what's next on the horizon."

Harvey Grotsky  
Publisher

# Corporate & Incentive Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

#### WEBSITE

www.themeetingmagazines.com

#### PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Harvey Grotsky  
cccpublisher@att.net

#### CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Mitch D. Miller  
cccartdirector@att.net

#### MANAGING EDITORS

Susan Wyckoff Fell  
ccceditor1@att.net  
Susan S. Gregg  
ccceditor2@att.net

#### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Karen Brost  
John Buchanan  
Harvey Chipkin  
Stella Johnson  
Andrea Montello  
Derek Reveron  
George Seli  
Steve Winston

#### PRESIDENT & CEO

Harvey Grotsky

#### VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

David A. Middlebrook  
cccoperations@att.net

#### ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES

2700 N. Military Trail, Suite 120  
Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394  
561-989-0600 • Fax: 561-989-9509

#### NEW YORK & MID-ATLANTIC STATES

561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509  
cccadvertising@att.net

#### NEW ENGLAND

Jody Estabrook  
774-283-4528 • Fax: 774-283-4527  
jodyestabrook@comcast.net

#### FLORIDA/CARIBBEAN

561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509  
cccadvertising@att.net

#### SOUTHWEST

561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509  
cccadvertising@att.net

#### SOUTHEAST

561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509  
cccadvertising@att.net

#### MIDWEST

Jim Kingwill  
847-537-9196 • Fax: 847-537-6519  
jim@kingwillco.com  
Barry Kingwill  
847-537-9196 • Fax: 847-537-6519  
barry@kingwillco.com

#### WEST

Marshall Rubin  
818-888-2407 • Fax: 818-888-4907  
mrubin@westworld.com

#### HAWAII

561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509  
cccadvertising@att.net

THE MOST **INDISPENSABLE**  
BUSINESS TOOL YOU CAN GIVE  
YOUR PEOPLE: **INSPIRATION.**



No hotel is more attuned to doing business than The Ritz-Carlton. Our state-of-the-art facilities, convenient business centers and flexible meeting spaces, together with our

anticipatory service and flawless attention to detail, produce a framework that ensures success. Whether your group is large or small, you'll find this is the perfect setting for an annual conference, small board meeting, retreat, senior staff meeting or incentive trip. And thanks to Rewarding Events, hosting your groups with us provides you with even more benefits through The Ritz-Carlton Rewards. For more information, please contact The Ritz-Carlton of your choice or visit [ritzcarlton.com/flawlessmeetings](http://ritzcarlton.com/flawlessmeetings).

### THE RITZ-CARLTON® REWARDS

#### INTRODUCING REWARDING EVENTS

- AMELIA ISLAND
- CANCUN
- DOVE MOUNTAIN
- FORT LAUDERDALE
- GRAND CAYMAN
- KEY BISCAYNE
- LAKE TAHOE
- NAPLES
- NAPLES GOLF
- ORLANDO, GRANDE LAKES
- PALM BEACH
- REYNOLDS PLANTATION
- ROSE HALL, JAMAICA
- SAN JUAN
- SARASOTA
- SOUTH BEACH
- ST. THOMAS



Available at participating Ritz-Carlton hotels. The Ritz-Carlton Rewards member must sign a sales/group contract with the hotel to qualify. There must be 10 or more guest rooms booked for at least one night to earn points on rooms. Only members who sign the contract or are the main contact on the contract receive the points or airline miles. Offer open to individuals only. Corporations and organizations are not eligible to earn points or airline miles. It is the member's responsibility to comply with their own company policy and ethics concerning travel programs. Earnings based on actual hotel meeting or event qualified revenue, excluding taxes, gratuities and service fees. Visit [ritzcarltonrewards.com](http://ritzcarltonrewards.com) for complete terms and conditions. All Ritz-Carlton Rewards terms and conditions apply. ©2011 The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C.



## Disney Cruise Line Unveils New Itineraries and Ports for 2012

CELEBRATION, FL — For the first time ever, Disney Cruise Line will set sail from three new ports in 2012 — New York, Seattle and Galveston, TX. Here is a sampling of the 2012 schedules:

- **New York.** Beginning May 25, the Disney Magic will sail a total of 20 cruises from New York, including eight-night cruises to the Bahamas and five-night cruises up the New England coast to Canada plus two-night cruises that will give a sampling of the Disney Cruise Line experience over a weekend.
- **Galveston.** Beginning September 22, the Disney Magic will sail 12 seven-night cruises from the Port of Galveston to the Western Caribbean. Ports of call include Grand Cayman and Mexico's Costa Maya and Cozumel.
- **Seattle.** Beginning May 28, the Disney Wonder will sail a total of 14 seven-night cruises from the Port of Seattle to Tracy Arm, Skagway, Juneau and Ketchikan, Alaska, and Victoria, BC.
- **Los Angeles.** For the first time, the Disney Wonder will offer a special 15-night voyage to Hawaii from Los Angeles, calling on Hilo; Kahului, Maui; Honolulu, Oahu; Nawiliwili, Kauai and Ensenada, Mexico. The Wonder will continue sailing seven-night Mexican Riviera cruises from the Port of Los Angeles for the majority of the year.
- **Port Canaveral.** The Disney Fantasy and Disney Dream will continue to sail a variety of Caribbean and Bahamian itineraries departing from Port Canaveral, FL. [www.disneycruise.com](http://www.disneycruise.com)



The Disney Wonder.

## Bally's Las Vegas Debuts Refreshed Meeting Spaces

LAS VEGAS, NV — Las Vegas Meetings by Caesars Entertainment announced that the two primary meeting spaces at Bally's Las Vegas were recently remodeled to include new floor coverings, wall coverings, door finishes and lighting. Keeping with



Bally's Grand Ballroom.

the classic décor of the property, all original glass chandeliers were preserved and enhanced by modern complementary sconces along the walls. "We are extremely pleased with the way that the space turned out," commented Michael Massari, vice president of meeting sales and operations. "The space was able to keep the classic Vegas style and charm of the rest of the property while still achieving a modern feel. The demand for this space has already increased. We have even had a few groups request to be moved because of the new look." Bally's Las Vegas is one of eight resorts in the Las Vegas Meetings by Caesars Entertainment family. This center-Strip property offers more than 3,000 hotel rooms and suites and 175,000 sf of meeting and event space. Bally's Las Vegas is also connected to Paris Las Vegas, offering additional flexibility for groups of all sizes. [www.lvmeetingsbycaesars.com](http://www.lvmeetingsbycaesars.com)

## Hoops Named New President and CEO of Indianapolis CVA

INDIANAPOLIS, IN — After a strategic three-month nationwide search, the Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Association (ICVA) named Leonard Hoops as its new president & CEO, effective May 31. "With



HOOPS

\$3 billion in new tourism-related developments now online, Indianapolis has arrived as a first-tier destination, truly competing in the national arena. Leonard's proven sales results, extensive marketing expertise, and strong convention industry knowledge make him the ideal person to take Indianapolis to the next level and capitalize on the city's new investments," said Michael Browning, chairman of the board of the ICVA. A seasoned executive with 25 years of corporate and destination marketing experience, Hoops most recently served as executive vice president and chief customer officer for the San Francisco Travel Association. Previously, Hoops served as senior vice president and chief marketing officer for the Sacramento CVB and SVP of marketing for the San Jose CVB. Hoops replaces Don Welsh who was recruited to head the Chicago Convention & Tourism Bureau. [www.visitindy.com](http://www.visitindy.com)

## MEETING VALUES

### Barton Creek Resort & Spa, Austin, TX.

The Business, Birdies and BBQ offer, with rates starting at \$295/person/night, includes: resort guest room; complete day meeting package with buffet breakfast, meeting room, a.m./p.m. breaks, buffet lunch and standard AV; golf on Crenshaw Cliffside golf course; and chef's choice barbecue dinner. Offer is valid for groups of 15 or more room nights over select July and August 2011 dates. For details, visit <http://www.bartoncreek.com/meeting-specials.aspx>.

■ **Mayfair Hotel & Spa, Coconut Grove, FL.** The 2011 Meeting & Event Perks offer includes: complimentary one-hour cocktail reception to include one-hour open bar and chef's choice of three served hors d'oeuvres; or complimentary Internet in meeting room, and complimentary coffee and tea throughout the day, each day; or complimentary afternoon break each day. For details, call 305-779-4532 or e-mail [alice.land@mayfairhotelandspa.com](mailto:alice.land@mayfairhotelandspa.com). [www.mayfairhotelandspa.com](http://www.mayfairhotelandspa.com)

■ **Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV.** Planners who book 15 or more room nights for meetings held anytime from June 1, 2011 through August 31, 2011 receive: 1/40 comp room; 1/25 upgrade to a one-bedroom suite at the group rate; up to four comp room nights for site/preplanning purposes; 20 percent discount on AV; 30 percent allowable attrition; and groups of 75 or more receive no F&B minimum and no attrition. 702-693-5507, [davidsu@hrhvegas.com](mailto:davidsu@hrhvegas.com). [www.hrhvegas.com](http://www.hrhvegas.com)

■ **The Phoenician, Scottsdale, AZ.** The Complete Meeting Package starts at \$109/night/attendee and includes accommodations; custom banquet menus and pricing; 20 percent off AV; triple Starwood Preferred Planner points; and complimentary in-room Internet for all attendees, fitness center access, one-bedroom suite for VIP and deluxe guest room for the group planner. Offer valid for meetings of 50 room nights held July 1–September 11, 2011. 480-423-2520, [www.thephoenician.com](http://www.thephoenician.com)

# Events Calendar

**MAY 24–26, 2011**  
**IMEX — THE WORLDWIDE EXHIBITION FOR INCENTIVE TRAVEL, MEETINGS AND EVENTS**  
 Messe Frankfurt  
 Germany  
 Contact: (011) 44-1273-227311  
[www.imex-frankfurt.com](http://www.imex-frankfurt.com)

**JUNE 2, 2011**  
**DMAI DESTINATIONS SHOWCASE CHICAGO**  
 Donald E. Stephens Convention Center  
 Rosemont, IL  
 Contact: 202-296-7888  
[www.destinationsshowcase.com](http://www.destinationsshowcase.com)

**JUNE 21–23, 2011**  
**AIBTM — THE AMERICAS MEETINGS & EVENTS EXHIBITION**  
 Baltimore Convention Center  
 Baltimore, MD  
 Contact: 203-840-5975  
[www.aibt.com](http://www.aibt.com)

**JULY 23–26, 2011**  
**MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL WORLD EDUCATION CONGRESS**  
 Orange County Convention Center  
 Orlando, FL  
 Contact: 972-702-3053  
[www.mpiweb.org](http://www.mpiweb.org)

**AUGUST 6–9, 2011**  
**ASAE ANNUAL MEETING & EXPOSITION**  
 America's Center Convention Complex  
 St. Louis, MO  
 Contact: 888-950-2723  
[www.asaeannualmeeting.org](http://www.asaeannualmeeting.org)

**OCTOBER 11–13, 2011**  
**IMEX AMERICA**  
 Sands Expo at the Venetian/Palazzo Hotel  
 Las Vegas, NV  
 Contact: +44 1273 227311  
[www.imexamerica.com](http://www.imexamerica.com)

**OCTOBER 13–15, 2011**  
**SITE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
 Bellagio  
 Las Vegas, NV  
 Contact: 312-321-5148  
[www.siteglobal.com](http://www.siteglobal.com)



Betty  
McNulty

# The Challenges of the New Health-Care Law

## The Health-Care Reform Reporting Requirements You Need to Know About

**T**he alarm clock is about to sound. The sun is up, and there is no time left to snooze. If you're a meetings professional with a U.S. pharmaceutical or biotech company, or a medical device manufacturer, you should know about new federal legislation that will dramatically change the way you plan and manage events that involve health care providers (HCPs).

The Physician Payments Sunshine Provisions of new national health care reform legislation require your company to report to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) all payments made — including meetings expenses — to doctors and teaching hospitals. These provisions are the first nationally mandated regulations to address payments and gifts provided to physicians and other health care professionals.

Under the Sunshine regulations, starting January 2012, meetings professionals will be required to capture data annually in a report to DHHS on the following HCP meetings-related expenditures — whether cash or in-kind services: food (beverage, meeting break snacks and all meals); travel, such as air, hotel room and ground transportation costs; education or conference materials and funding; entertainment; gifts; honoraria.

### Heading Off the Billion-Dollar Problem: Guidance for Meeting Pros

This could be a billion-dollar problem if companies don't deal with it now. Complying with the Sunshine Provisions directly impacts your company's bottom line and brand integrity. Fines are hefty for

each failure to report data (up to \$100,000 for each intentional incident). And, because the information will become public, failure to report will bring negative attention to your firm. States also may decide to restrict the rights of those companies and HCPs that have been fined and are operating within their state.

The Sunshine mandates may seem like a tall order, but you can implement strategies to eliminate confusion and streamline the data management process by considering these six steps:

1. Work with your organization's compliance officer and other key departments to understand how your company, and the types of meetings you hold, are affected by the Sunshine Provisions. For example, under the legislation, while you must report on educational expenditures for HCPs, the provisions exempt educational material provided to HCPs for the benefits of patients. There is certainly room for interpretation in the provisions, so your chief compliance officer will have to define what exactly they mean for you. There will be HCP spend outside of the meetings department, and the compliance officer is typically the point person and executive sponsor responsible for bringing the pieces together.
2. Learn where information on meetings expenditures to HCPs resides. For example, you may need to check with Accounts Payable, as that department may have reimbursement records for doctors. Partner with any third-party planning companies you use to make



## TAKE YOUR THINKING TO A WHOLE NEW PLACE.

There's just something about Australia that changes the way you think. At first glance you might think it's the stunning natural settings like the Swan River or its unique meeting locations. But organise an event here and you'll soon discover it's something far deeper.

A rich history of cultural freedom and innovation has helped Australians think differently for over 40,000 years. More recently, our fresh and imaginative approach has ensured the success of world-class corporate and association meetings, rewarding incentives and unrivalled global events.

So if you're after an event that will inspire new ideas, deliver real business results and return on investment, look no further than Australia.

To get your clients thinking differently visit [businesssevents.australia.com](http://businesssevents.australia.com)

Business Events  
Australia

sure that the flow of data is smooth and complete.

3. Educate planners and partners on how your company identifies and tracks HCP spend, including what data should be used to identify HCPs uniquely. For example, your company may have more than one national identification number on record for an HCP. Check with IT, sales and other departments to make sure your IDs are the most up-to-date and applicable to the right doctor. Include partners in your training and planning, as many times they play a key role in managing HCP-related events.
4. Build a comprehensive communications strategy that informs HCP attendees,

compensation for services other than consulting, honoraria, gifts, entertainment, food, travel (including the specified destinations), education, research, charitable contributions.” Matching fields on your meeting request forms and budgets to the language that’s actually in the legislation will make it easier when it comes time to provide meetings-related spending data to your company’s compliance or legal departments.

6. Implement an SMMP powered by a meetings technology platform that consolidates all event-related data to capture the entire HCP-related meeting spend. Make sure that the technology can be configured with custom meeting request forms,

*This could be a billion-dollar problem if companies don't deal with it now.*

hotels and other venues about your Sunshine Provisions data recording and reporting requirements, as well as any caps on spending.

For example, include in every event communication a clear description of the expenses that your company can reimburse versus those that must be paid for by the attendee. In contracts, hotels should be informed of any existing company spending rules for HCPs to ensure they don't breach limits on food and beverage costs.

5. Align the meetings budget and spend categories you track to the actual categories spelled out in the Sunshine Provisions. For example, the language for meetings-related spend in the legislation includes: “consulting fees, com-

approval processes and budgets to ensure all HCP-related data is captured accurately and consistently. Relying on numerous spreadsheet reports for each individual meeting is inefficient and subject to error. Technology can facilitate HCP-specific reporting and comprehensive data capture, ensuring your company is in compliance.

**The Benefits of Getting It Right**

The good news is The Physician Payments Sunshine Provisions add a new level of nonsense accountability on spending for HCPs. While it may seem like a lot of extra work, the bright side is that meetings managers can take this opportunity to gain important new visibility and recognition for their SMMPs among other business units and senior executives. **C&IT**

*Betty McNulty, Senior Vice President, Global Account Management & Customer Operations, StarCite, 800-628-1058, info@starcite.com, www.starcite.com*



R.O.I.

(RETURN ON INSPIRATION)

A meeting in San Diego is positive, uplifting and provides you with an endorphin boost so big it'll stay with you long after the meeting is over. It's all about the attitude, and San Diego corners the market on the "can do" variety. It's a contagiously upbeat vibe that leads to positivity, productivity and strong partnerships. From real-time hotel searches to personal site planning to an event promotion toolkit, discover the kind of positive results our expert team can deliver for you.

**San Diego** ALWAYS LEADS TO POSITIVE RESULTS.

Visit [sandiego.org/positiveresults](http://sandiego.org/positiveresults)

Finding a 'Quality Environment' for...

# The Big Think

Executive Retreats Are Making a Comeback



Photo courtesy of The Resort at Paws Up / inset photos courtesy of Global Image

Roughing it is all an illusion at the 37,000-acre Resort at Paws Up in Missoula, Montana, where executives enjoy a reception in a luxury camp pavilion, thrilling white-water rafting, rodeo demonstrations viewed from luxury skyboxes, paintball, archery and more.

Executive retreats — small, high level, purposeful meetings — were in retreat themselves during the last couple of years. But they are coming back, though sometimes in a modified form. David Gabri, president and CEO of Associated Luxury Hotels International, a national sales network, says, "Business is back and people are back to the business of business. That means they are over dealing with a crisis and need to look to what's next on the horizon."

Jody Kelly, managing partner of Global Image, a certified woman-owned event planning company in San Antonio, says, "They still don't want anything that sounds luxurious. While

executives never really stopped getting together, we had to look at places where the perception was a positive one."

Danielle Spinetta, event manager with Samantha Smith Productions in San Francisco, says that executive retreats "didn't seem to go away during the economic crisis. However, they were more conscious of where they were staying and how much they were spending. These kinds of meetings stayed in place because they are all about doing business."

What "went away" and are now coming back, says Spinetta, "are retreats organized for individual departments within a company. These were never big spending events, but a chance for

people to get together once a year and set goals. Those have now come back."

But still, says Spinetta, "Our clients do not put their name on anything — not the lobby listing, nothing."

As business picks up, says Will Wiest, director of sales at the Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel, which is on the coast of Southern California, "There has been scheduling of these kinds of meetings as little as three months out, but now that availability is dwindling, they will be booking further out."

The trend in recent years, says Wiest, is that these meetings are more and more "meeting focused," and less focused on activities such as golf and spa. That is partly because of the perception

issue. Says Wiest, "A few years ago you had them flying in private planes to get here; now everybody flies commercially."

### Managers on a Mission

No matter what they're called or where they're held, executive retreats have one thing in common: specific goals, whether that is strategy, dealing with a crisis or strengthening relationships.

While executive meetings might never have gone away, according to Gabri, "they have been rebranded. They might be called think tanks or strategic conferences or even horizon outlooks. But the goal is the same: to bring together important constituents in an organization to drive the direction of the company or industry. This is 'big think' stuff that is difficult to do at a board meeting."

Spinetta says that there has been a strong resurgence in health-care indus-

and a clear understanding of the goal of the meeting.

"These meetings," says Valenti, "represent to the companies that are spending valuable resources, time and money, the opportunity to evaluate their current, short and long-term goals. The tone of the meetings has changed from round-table/board meeting type of gatherings to more targeted events."

And while perception issues remain as far as luxury meetings go, Gabri says, "Luxury is coming back, though it might be called something else. For these meetings, they might use a term like 'quality environment.' You need to enable people to be in their comfort zone at this level. These people are reconnecting — and they need to do so in an intimate manner where there is less noise, and you can allow leaders to be leaders."

"There's a lot of time spent together," says Gabri, "whether it's at a board table,



*"We were going to have the group go to South Africa when the recession hit. We looked at domestic alternatives, hoping to get the closest feeling we could to an exotic location like South Africa — and it came out Paws Up."*

Jody Kelly, Managing Partner, Global Image, San Antonio, TX

try executive retreats. "They were under the magnifying glass," says Spinetta, "but meetings in that industry are very important, especially with the coming of national health-care. They have to meet to figure out how this is going to change their businesses."

Meetings may not be as frequent these days, says Vanessa Valenti, in-house meeting planner at Lake Placid Lodge in upstate New York, "but the ones that have survived cuts are more vitally important. They are more efficient. The emphasis is very goal- and direction-oriented, as opposed to team-building. Executives are going into these meetings with a clearly defined purpose

or having meals together. A lot of 'side-bar' stuff comes out in that environment. If they spend a weekend, it does usually involve an afternoon of golf."

Wiest says executive retreat groups "are setting goals and strategies for the year; that's one reason we did quite a few of them in January." He adds, "There also are some companies that have quarterly meetings with their leadership teams, perhaps leading up to their quarterly earnings reports."

### Venue Variability

Despite the word "retreats," these meetings can be found downtown. However, many planners have found



*A unique*  
WAY TO MEET

The comfort of 300 splendid accommodations surrounded by the natural beauty of 2,500 tropical acres.

A world-class marina from which to charter boating and fishing adventures that relax and inspire.

And, because we know great ideas are born on the back nine as well as the boardroom, we offer two championship 18-hole golf courses.

We invite you to discover a Unique Way to Meet... at Ocean Reef Club.



**OCEAN REEF CLUB**  
A UNIQUE WAY OF LIFE  
KEY LARGO, FLORIDA

Meetings.OceanReef.com  
800-843-2730

30,000 SQ. FT. ULTRA-MODERN MEETING AND FUNCTION SPACE

300 LUXURY ACCOMMODATIONS

36 HOLES OF MEMORABLE GOLF

7 DINING VENUES



Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, FL, is a private tropical enclave for executive meetings that require the utmost confidentiality.

Photo courtesy of Ocean Reef Club

that placing an executive retreat in a truly out-of-the-way place makes for productive events and happy clients.

Kelly says that her first meeting at The Resort at Paws Up, a 37,000-acre luxury property outside of Missoula, MT, “was probably the biggest surprise I ever encountered. We were going to have the group go to South Africa when the recession hit. We looked at domestic alternatives, hoping to get the closest feeling we could to an exotic location like South Africa — and it came out Paws Up. We have now sent three incentives there, as well as several meetings.”

While planners point out that accessibility is frequently critical for locations because participants have very tight schedules, Kelly says that Missoula — the gateway for Paws Up — is “not that hard to get to.”

Her concern in the beginning, says Kelly, was: “How will everybody feel when they don’t know each other and find themselves in a place like that? But in fact it’s never been a problem. They stay in Wilderness Estates, individual buildings, which have three very large suites in each one. They share a kitchen and a living room, and I’ve never had one complaint. In fact, they tend to bond in those areas — and that adds to the meeting itself.

“There’s something mystical about Montana,” says Kelly. “You’re looking at the mountains, down the valley. You kind of forget about everything and

just enjoy being with the people you’re with.” And as far as the luxury perception issue, says Kelly, “You can say ‘I’m going to Montana’ instead of ‘I’m going to Pebble Beach.’”

Kelly is looking forward to the opening of Paws Up’s Bull Barn, which is literally the conversion of a bull barn into a conference facility. Scheduled to open later this year or early next year, says John Romfo, director of sales and marketing, “The downstairs will be a meeting room for about 60; the upstairs will accommodate 200.”

Paws Up is among a number of emerging resorts that seem specifically tailored for executive retreats. Romfo says that most of the groups welcomed by Paws Up are in the 20- to 50-person range and that “the only reason we might get to 100 is if spouses are invited.”

He adds, “It’s easy to



**“We look at what activity best brings people together. Golf does tend to bring people together, but so do cooking classes and other interactive experiences.”**

Danielle Spinetta, Event Manager, Samantha Smith Productions, San Francisco, CA

take over the entire resort. Although we’re small as far as number of units, we sit on 37,000 acres. It’s a great place to bond with colleagues or your best customers.

“The first and foremost reason they come,” says Romfo, “is to immerse themselves in a setting like this. The reason

we stand apart from most ranches is the resort component we have introduced. It is not rustic; we have the caliber of corporate environment that this kind of meeting requires.”

Spinetta believes that some meetings are most fruitful when they are far from anything else. “Places like Ritz-Carlton Half Moon Bay (California),” she says, “are in the middle of nowhere. The attendees have no choice but to listen to what their colleagues have to say.”

Similarly, she says, Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel “has worked well for us in the past. We did a lot with them as prices came down during the last couple of years.”

The Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, FL, offers the ideal combination of great service, seclusion and sensational surroundings. The 2,000-acre private retreat in the subtropical Florida Keys island chain boasts its own a private airport as well as three golf courses, private beach with saltwater lagoon, marinas, shops, spa and more. The resort’s respect for its guests’ privacy has won it a long-standing reputation as a premier executive retreat, playing host to celebrities and statesmen alike.

After a period when executive meetings tended to be very close to home, they are moving farther afield.

And, says Gabri, “These are leaders who are looking for a distinguished kind

of venue that coincides with the objectives of the organization.”

Privacy is often important, says Gabri, who adds, “They want an atmosphere that encourages open dialogue. It is the epitome of relationship economics; when people are feeling good, they are more likely to share their vision.”

But Gabri agrees, “You could be in The Peninsula Hotel in downtown Chicago or in a resort in Florida. A lot has to do with the time allowed.” And sometimes, says Gabri, “These events are a lead-up to a larger event. Here is where they might determine the theme or goal of the next big meeting, like the annual conference.”

Gabri says that sometimes smaller gems are called for where the retreat might be the only meeting on-property.

When meetings have a serious intent, says Wiest, “They require the high level of service that we can deliver. We tend



Katie Koch, Senior Project Manager, Encore Planning, Arvada, CO

to put these guests on our club level, which is our hotel within a hotel. They frequently have informal meetings there; it becomes like the first-class section of an airplane, complete with the fine food presentation.”

Katie Koch, a senior project manager for Encore Planning LLC in Golden, CO, plans high-level meetings on a regular basis for MillerCoors, the brewing company. Three events a year are formal meetings for top company executives and owners of beer distributorships. Working with Associated Luxury Hotels International, Koch has recently booked these meetings at properties such as The Peninsula Chicago and The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess.

“The executives and owners come together to discuss in-depth business issues over extended periods of time,” she says, “and it’s important from the planner’s standpoint to have a high-level hotel because of the services, attention and access required for these executives.

I have a lot of details to handle onsite, and I need a hotel that is equally responsive to me as I try to put myself in the shoes of the executives. That allows me to do my job more efficiently.”

Koch also likes the boutique-like size of The Peninsula, which gives smaller VIP groups like this the attention they deserve.

### Retreat Customization

Spinetta says her company works for months in advance to get speakers from outside and from within the company. And, she says, “We create a tight flow of what each day will be like. They might spend some time at a table brainstorming about the future of the

**“It’s important from the planner’s standpoint to have a high-level hotel because of the services, attention and access required for these executives.”**

company. They feel it’s important that everybody is moving in the right — and the same — direction.”

Spinetta and her colleagues will interview people in the company at all levels — and will then do focus-type groups on potential topics and speakers, asking, “Is this what you want to hear?”

As for activities, says Spinetta, “We look at what activity best brings people together. Golf does tend to bring people together, but so do cooking classes and other interactive experiences.”

The challenge, according to Valenti, is “to have the big thinkers have a time and place where they can gather and have the ideas flow freely. We accomplish this by providing a luxurious setting, far enough away from their day-to-day reality, while still feeling connected to the tools needed and the task at hand.”

At Paws Up, says Romfo, most groups meet for half the day for “a really down and dirty focused four-hour meeting. Then it’s lunch and then an



*A unique*  
WAY TO MEET

Savor the pleasure of every possible culinary experience.

from a hearty burger to multi-star gourmet. Enjoy Buccaneer Island.

our own unspoiled slice of Caribbean beach life with a saltwater lagoon and sparkling pools.

And, after a day of meetings that stretch your mind, our spa and fitness center offers myriad ways to unwind and recharge.

We invite you to discover a Unique Way to Meet... at Ocean Reef Club.



**OCEAN REEF CLUB**  
A UNIQUE WAY OF LIFE  
KEY LARGO, FLORIDA

Meetings.OceanReef.com  
800-843-2730

30,000 SQ. FT. ULTRA-MODERN MEETING AND FUNCTION SPACE

300 LUXURY ACCOMMODATIONS

36 HOLES OF MEMORABLE GOLF

7 DINING VENUES



# UNIQUELY DIFFERENT



**TULALIP**  
RESORT | CASINO | SPA

WHERE ELSE CAN YOU meet in spaces so inviting you won't want to adjourn... **ONLY AT TULALIP.**

**CONDÉ NAST TOP RATED RESORT**



Sales & Catering: (888) 272-1111 | www.tulalipresort.com | 10200 Quil Ceda Blvd. | Tulalip, WA 98271 | I-5, Exit 200 between Seattle & Vancouver BC



Photo courtesy of Tulalip Resort Casino

Located 30 minutes from downtown Seattle, Tulalip Resort Casino offers luxury accommodations and special suites for executive functions.

activity or a variety of activities that might include horseback riding, river rafting or fishing.”

### Retreat to Recreation

With the move of many retreats toward expansive venues, recreation takes a larger role.

Says Romfo at Paws Up, “One minute, you’re in a meeting room tackling nuts and bolts issues; the next minute you’re on horseback with a few colleagues, going down river and talking through things. A planner has to think of the entire experience — the food, the activities, the attention to detail. It’s the Montana experience that they’re most attracted to.”

Her retreats at Paws Up, says Kelly, “usually feature meetings in the mornings. In the past at these types of meetings golf was involved. One of my groups did ask about golf, and there are courses nearby. But then I tell them they can do white-water rafting, ATVing, rappelling and more. Bottom line, we have never had one Paws Up group play golf.”

Different environments fit different agendas, and perhaps an executive retreat focusing on risk/reward or out-of-the-box thinking might find just the right fit at Tulalip Resort Casino, with its games of chance inside and its thought-provoking scenery outside. Located 30 minutes north of Seattle and situated on 80 acres, the resort is surrounded by some of the Pacific Northwest’s most spectacular scenery. Tulalip offers spacious 500-sf guest rooms featuring local

Tulalip tribal art. Included in the resort’s 30,000 sf of meeting space are special suites adaptable for executive functions. The 2,000-sf Player’s Suite comes equipped with a professional-size pool table, dart board, arcade-style games and professional sports memorabilia — fostering the spirit of competition and creativity. Nearby are the resort’s casino, cabaret, six restaurants/lounges and full-service spa.

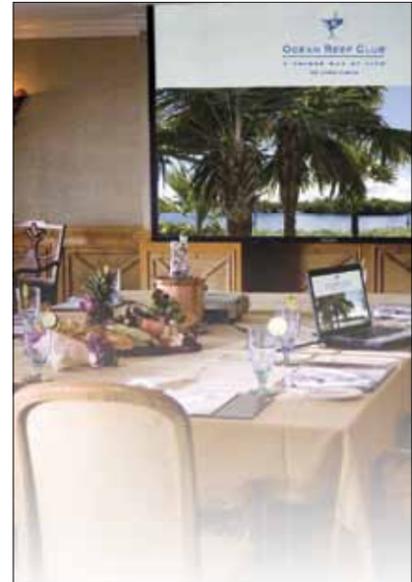
### Rethinking Retreats

Executive retreats continue to evolve as the economy recovers. As with other conferences, food and beverage are constantly being upgraded.

“People are really looking to healthy, farm-to-table food,” says Spinetta. “Whatever we do with food, we try to do something different. We had an event a few months ago when San Francisco hotels were packed. We finally found a 50,000-sf space for 250 people. We had seven real food trucks that usually work the streets of San Francisco come in. It was healthy, it supported local business, and it looked appealing. It was a huge hit, though it was an interesting challenge because we had to do seven different contracts.”

Since it was a meeting for directors who wanted to think outside the box, says Spinetta, “It was a fun way to show that times are changing and people are changing.” And the best thing, says Spinetta, is that it was cheaper than going to a hotel.

Executing a successful executive meeting does more than impress the C-suite with exotic activities and luxury accommodations: As a recent Carlson Wagonlit Travel Management Institute survey affirmed, small meetings (fewer than 25 attendees) account for nearly two-thirds of all meetings. For strategic-thinking planners, that’s a golden opportunity to make a real meeting-spend impact — thereby quite possibly creating a place for themselves at the table for the next executive retreat. **C&IT**



## A unique WAY TO MEET

When your meeting attendees arrive at Ocean Reef Club, they are transported to a unique way of life—one that we have been perfecting for more than sixty years.

- Set on the tip of Key Largo
- 2,500 splendid tropical acres
- An island world unto itself
- Outstanding meeting facilities
  - Elegant accommodations
- Superb golf, boating and fishing.
- Exclusivity of a world-class private club.

Call for more details on our Summer Special at The Reef with rates starting from \$129.



**OCEAN REEF CLUB**  
A UNIQUE WAY OF LIFE  
KEY LARGO, FLORIDA

Meetings.OceanReef.com  
800-843-2730

30,000 SQ. FT. ULTRA-MODERN MEETING AND FUNCTION SPACE

300 LUXURY ACCOMMODATIONS

36 HOLES OF MEMORABLE GOLF

7 DINING VENUES

# Celebrate Your Success Story

## Use the WOW Factor to Make the Message Stick

Entertainment has always been an essential ingredient in successful meetings. And it always will be. The question of the day, of course, is whether the recent recession and particularly the media backlash against the notion of opulent events will have any enduring effect on how entertainment is used.

For some enterprises, entertainment is so critical to the corporate mission that neither the economic downturn nor the chill of perception issues could deter them over the last couple of years. "For our culture, it's very important that we use entertainment," says Jay Staggs, director of communications at El Dorado, AR-based Murphy USA, which operates more than 1,100 gas station/convenience markets in 23 states. Staggs plans all three of the company's major annual meetings — and entertainment is a crucial part of each.

"One of the reasons we use entertainment," Staggs says, "is that one of our core values is to celebrate. So, throughout the year, we are continually celebrating our people and our business success. So any time we have a meeting, there is always a sense of entertainment and celebration around that meeting."

Crystal Lucas, director, event operations and services at United Business Media (UBM) in Downers Grove, IL, shares Staggs' enthusiasm for event entertainment. But she views its practical value through a different prism. "For us, entertainment helps provide one of the key pieces of any meeting — and that

is face-to-face marketing," says Lucas, who will plan a half-dozen meetings this year and use entertainment at all of them. "At our events, it's about getting to know people and building relationships." Effective use of entertainment



**Crystal Lucas**  
Director, Event Operations and Services, United Business Media  
Downers Grove, IL

*"Entertainment helps provide one of the key pieces of any meeting...face-to-face marketing. It's about getting to know people and building relationships."*

fosters an environment in which such networking can flourish.

### Recovery Mode

Despite its proven role in the creation of memorable meetings, entertainment as a budget line item came under intense scrutiny, beginning in 2008. "We definitely saw a downturn in the use of entertainment after that," says Erik Palmer, director of event management at sister properties the Ritz-Carlton Los Angeles and JW Marriott Los Angeles, both of which opened early last year. "That was because there were fewer meetings to begin with, and the ones that were annual events got cut back even though the company went through with them. But entertainment budgets got cut along with the budgets for everything else." Now, he says, the pendulum has started to swing back, "and we're seeing more being spent on entertainment."

Even during the worst of the recession, entertainment never vanished from meeting agendas, says Aaron Mendelson, director of special events and entertainment at the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center near Orlando. "But what I've seen is that the company that used to get a full orchestra ended up with a jazz trio," Mendelson says. "And the company that used to use a jazz trio ended up with a solo pianist. But there was still entertainment. So, it has been the scale of the entertainment that has changed. But everybody knows entertainment is important to the success of a meeting."

Through the recession, with every aspect of her budgets under increased scrutiny, Lucas found that with a little creativity, she could resolve fiscal challenges as a win for all involved.

For a 2009 UBM meeting that drew more than 5,000 attendees to Gaylord Palms, Lucas approached the hotel with a budget challenge and a unique selling proposition. She asked the hotel to become her partner in the creation of a consolidated party, a big event paid for by multiple sponsors, each of whom got the benefit of a major event at a less expensive cost than if they had single-handedly sponsored the event.

The result: thrilled attendees, happy sponsors and a hotel that got the added benefit of keeping a large crowd on property for discretionary F&B expenditures before and after the party.

"Every area of our budgets was up for cuts or at least the consideration of cuts," says Lucas. "And entertainment was one that got particularly looked at." As a result, she says, she had to find new ways to fund entertainment rather than slash her budget.

Meanwhile, Staggs and Murphy USA have pushed the entertainment envelope — and also hired the renowned Disney Event Group to take event entertainment to a new level.

"We have a real passion for our meetings," says Staggs. "But we also always try to get the biggest bang for our buck. That said, over the past couple of years, we've probably shifted more money into entertainment than into any other aspect of our meetings. That's how important entertainment is to us."

### The Sea Change

Despite the enthusiasm of planners such as Staggs and Lucas, the recession and meeting industry downturn have brought a new focus to entertainment, its cost and perhaps most important, its perception inside and outside the organization.

"There is definitely a different lens that



**Chris Gaia**  
Vice President of Marketing  
Maritz Travel Co.  
Fenton, MO

*"The one important question...is whether the entertainment choice is appropriate. Or whether it's too opulent. That's the key issue planners are dealing with."*

buzz around it. But the question is, is that kind of buzz appropriate for where your organization is in terms of its route back from the recession?"

Somewhat surprisingly, Gaia and other experts stress that in general, internal perception among management, meeting attendees and rank-and-file staff are more important than external perceptions. "The one important question you have to ask now when it comes to your internal audience is whether the entertainment choice is appropriate," says Gaia. "Or whether it's too opulent. That's the key issue planners are dealing with now and will be, going forward."

But, Gaia adds, a key component of major meetings and incentive programs will continue to be the wow factor. And nothing, he says, creates wow factor better than blockbuster entertainment.

### A New Sense of Purpose

Although many planners have applied such requisite wisdom and discipline for years, many more in the future will learn to connect a core message or the underlying purpose of the meeting to the deployment of entertainment that can effectively deliver such messaging.

Increasingly, no longer is a comedian just a comedian, a magician just a magician, or an improv troupe simply funny entertainment. Instead, each is a delivery platform for a message or content that can be customized to the needs of a specific meeting.

"The planners who really get it are the ones that can connect the message to the entertainment," says Palmer. "And you should target that customized entertainment at the right points in the meeting. For example, use some high-energy entertainment before the opening general session. That can set the tone for the entire meeting."

Mendelson and his team at Gaylord Palms were practicing what Palmer preaches long before the recession. Integrating key messaging into the entertainment is something the hotel has

entertainment is being viewed through since the recession, says Kurt Paben, senior vice president at Minneapolis-based Carlson Marketing. "There was a time when always using big-name entertainment was quite in vogue. Part of the competitive equation was who could have the splashiest names. That definitely has been dialed back. But companies still realize that they need entertainment at their meetings."

Today as never before, however, optics is not only an issue, it's a major concern to many companies, especially publicly traded ones. "One of the things we talk to clients a lot about now," says Chris Gaia, vice president of marketing at Fenton, MO-based Maritz Travel Co., "is that entertainment is one of those attributes of a meeting that everybody knows about, so you can create a lot of

By John Buchanan

always done for corporate clients, he says. "For example, we've used improv actors who appear to infiltrate the meeting," he says. "They go up on stage and interrupt in a funny way with the important message the meeting needs to convey. But it's done very creatively, and it's a lot of fun. Attendees love that sort of thing, because they get the message, but they also get to have fun with it."

No one understands that better than Disney Event Group (DEG), the Orlando-based event entertainment arm of the global entertainment behemoth. And they, too, have focused for a long time on messaging as the important element in entertainment.

"Our goal is not really about creating an entertaining moment," says Mark Huffman, a creative director at DEG. "Yes, we want that to be part of the outcome. But it's really about sitting down with a client and going through an in-depth discussion about the goal of their meeting."

As a result of its creative corporate culture, DEG has always focused on the idea of story, Huffman says. "What is the story that needs to be told here and how can we best tell it?" he asks rhetorically. "And it's a matter of pinpointing the exact messages that must be gotten across to attendees."

Ideally, he notes, the messaging will be experiential. For example, when a corporate client wanted entertainment built around their slogan "Scaling the heights," DEG created an opening reception event akin to a base camp on the way to the summit of Mt. Everest. "The CEO then talked about the journey that lay ahead for attendees over the next few days," Huffman says. "It was a very dramatic way to kick off the meeting and get the CEO's message across in a way that was truly engaging and memorable."

Before he started doing business with DEG two years ago, Murphy USA did a lot of fun things. "We've had comedians and bands and dancers," Staggs says. "We've done all kinds of different things. But it wasn't until we started working with DEG that we figured out how we could



**Aaron Mendelson**  
Director of Special Events and  
Entertainment  
Gaylord Palms Resort  
Kissimmee, FL

*"The scale of the entertainment has changed. But everybody knows entertainment is important to the success of a meeting."*

really use that entertainment to support our message. And to use that entertainment in a much more impactful way than just throwing a dance troupe onstage or bringing out a comedian. Now, our entertainment is so integrated into the meeting that it's hard for attendees to tell the difference between the core of the meeting day and when we're moving into an entertainment segment."

The key to success, Staggs says, is to understand a simple practical formula. "It's not like we have this entertainment and then we try to mix the message in there," he says. "It's actually designed that way from the beginning, based on the message."

The delivery platform is a cast of unique 'streetmosphere' characters, created after extensive research into the culture and customer base of Murphy USA.

For example, at two recent meetings at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort, DEG unleashed "Tammy and Tommy," two brand-fans who have sold their belongings and bought an RV to visit every Murphy gas station in America. In their enthusiasm, they even jump on stage and interrupt the company's CEO — to hilarious results.

And attendee survey results have been good, too. "For example, in satisfaction surveys from our store managers, there are questions about the entertainment, about the messaging at the meeting," Staggs says. "And last year, we had the highest satisfaction scores we ever had. And this year we're topping last year. And one reason for that is that we've continued to raise the bar for the entertainment at our meetings."

Lucas has also mastered the principle of building the message into the entertainment. For an upcoming Orlando meeting at Gaylord Palms, she has booked a magician for a sponsored party.

"The sponsor will work with the magician to come up with a script that incorporates information about their company into the magician's act."

Over the years, Lucas has performed such magic with a variety of kinds of interactive entertainment, from comedians to stilt walkers. She has also used disc jockeys to get the point across.

But she also sees a distinct and important role for entertainment simply as a facilitator of attendee relaxation and enjoyment after the rigors of the meeting day. "At our meetings, we like to create networking opportunities that help sponsors and attendees get together. And entertainment is a good way to make that happen."

#### Fresh Ideas

Given its role historically and the new considerations it's facing today, event entertainment will always be driven by a need to create excitement. As a result, Palmer is now seeing a wave of popularity for high-energy Broadway hits such

as "Stomp," a theatrical sensation that unifies its cast and the audience through rhythm, energy and movement. Shows by the Laker Girls is another planner favorite at Palmer's two Los Angeles Ritz-Carlton properties.

Another trend is pyrotechnics and state-of-the-art audio-visual technology to ramp up the performance. "That technology just means that everything is more exciting now," Palmer says.

When it comes to clever ways to incorporate messaging into the entertainment, Palmer is being asked for magicians, Tarot card readers and jugglers — all of whom can deliver customized patter as part of their act.

Larry Weaver, a comedian who also operates Larry Weaver Entertainment, a Durham, NC-based booking agency for other comics at corporate events, has seen demand rise sharply for "clean" comics or other key meeting participants, such as an industry expert. "Since the recession," Weaver says, "every entertainer I know working the corporate market began to offer an educational or teambuilding component to their act." Such an approach, he says, offers yet another creative way to match messaging to delivery platform — in a very entertaining way.

#### Different Strokes

Janaye Roy, senior staffing programs manager at San Francisco-based biotech pioneer Genentech, views entertainment in much the way Lucas does — primarily as a device to facilitate networking at events such as receptions. One reason: Medical meetings are intensive, and attendees often suffer from information overload.

Oftentimes at these large-scale medical meetings, attendees are so filled with data that it can be labor-intensive, says Roy, who will plan about 20 meetings this year — half of which will use entertainment. "We like to provide those professionals with a chance to unwind and relax at our events. We want to create an inviting but

low-key environment where they can have an opportunity to talk to our leaders, but not in a stuffy or high-pressure environment. We find that it's about allowing people to have meaningful conversations without feeling pressured. Entertainment helps us accomplish that."

At the same time, Roy says, she and Genentech are under a strict kind of scrutiny that pre-dated the recession and is specific to their industry and corporate mission.

"Because of the nature of the business we're in — the fact that we make life-saving drugs and cancer medications — we always have to be concerned about being low key, whether the economy is booming or we're in a recession," Roy says. "So it's always very important to



**Kurt Paben**  
Senior Vice President  
Carlson Marketing  
Minneapolis, MN

*"Companies will still throw big parties... But what you'll need to back up that decision is measurement that you achieved the goal of the meeting."*

me when I'm working with an entertainment company that we don't do anything that could have the appearance of being over the top. We don't throw wild parties where we're spending money that could be put back into R&D for new drugs that could save lives."

#### Separate From the Pack

Regardless of whether entertainment is used for the big bang at an opening night recession or closing night banquet, or simply used as the background for attendee commingling and networking at an evening social event, every company needs to think in terms of setting itself apart, the experts agree. "It doesn't matter what business you're in, but you need to separate yourself from your competitors — from the pack," Mendelson says. "And you have to learn to do that in innovative and creative ways. And part of that is to be innovative and creative in terms of how you use entertainment at your meetings."

#### Final Thoughts

Even more important is a fundamental reality that companies and meeting planners understand very well, based on long experience: Using meetings to motivate, facilitate bottom-line results and reward performance will forever be a foundational pillar of business.

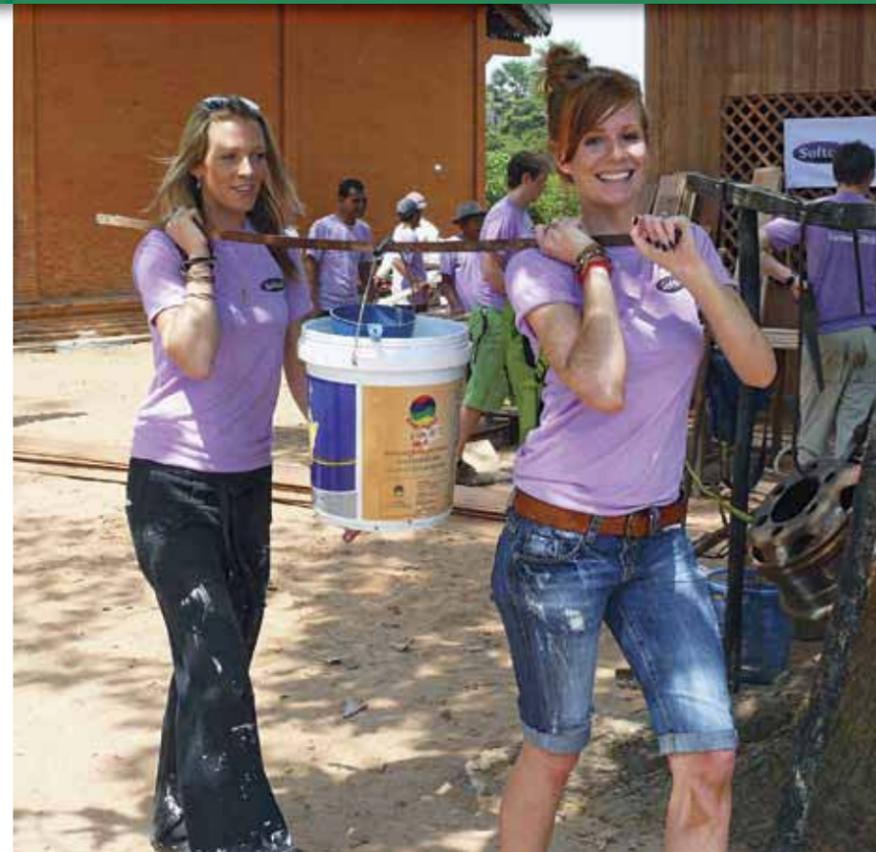
In turn, that means that if truth really be told, traditional big-name entertainment will continue to play a critical role in some major meetings, such as annual customer events or at product launches.

"Going forward, companies will still throw big parties, with big-name entertainment," Paben says. "But what you'll need to back up that decision is measurement that you achieved the goal of the meeting. That you achieved the business result you wanted. And if throwing a party in the Super Dome with Jimmy Buffet can help you increase your sales and profits, it's a good investment. But to make those kinds of investments now, you have to show that you have a plan for the return on that investment." **C&IT**



Photo courtesy of Colorado Wilderness Rides and Guides

This team of attendees displays appreciation for their cycling teambuilding activity. Joshua Baruch, the owner, manager and senior guide of Colorado Wilderness Rides and Guides, customizes corporate teambuilding activities “to produce amazing experiences that bring your group or team to a new place — physically, mentally, emotionally, philosophically and structurally.”



Photos courtesy of Hands Up Holidays

Teamwork is the name of the game: The top performers for Softcat, a UK-based software reseller, spent two days of their 10-day incentive to Cambodia and Vietnam renovating classrooms and building a library at a local junior high school in a Cambodian village. Volunteering is often an integral part of an incentive program nowadays and often helps the team bond in a more meaningful way.

# How to Achieve Esprit de Corps Boost Morale, Productivity and Have a Little Fun, Too

Nearly 40 years ago, George O. Charrier, a Procter & Gamble employee, wrote “COG’s Ladder: A Model of Group Growth.” The teambuilding treatise outlined the five steps necessary for groups to work together more efficiently. Cog’s Ladder is still used today by many companies and organizations such as the U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Air Force Academy.

Starting in the polite stage, groups move to the why-we’re-here stage and then go through the struggle-for-power stage. Next, they learn how to cooperate and finally settle into acceptance — the esprit de corps stage.

We’ve come a long way since Charrier penned “COG’s Ladder” in 1972. Nowadays teambuilding pro-

grams feature extraordinary activities and events that often reflect the most innovative ideas trending in popular culture and contemporary society, from giving back to the community to getting back to nature.

As Christina Wilde, director of events and experiences at Switch: Liberate Your Brand, a St. Louis, MO-based independent experiential marketing agency, says, “Today, the purpose of any form of teambuilding activity is to level the playing field so that position within the company has no relevance in the overall exercise or experience at hand. The value of teambuilding is that it partners people with others that may not interact with each other on a daily basis, leading to stronger relationships, as well as a boost in morale.”

## Shared Experiences

What are the important issues at hand? Joshua Baruch, owner of Boulder, CO-based Colorado Wilderness Rides and Guides, a one-stop shop for customized tours and teambuilding events, cites group interaction, relationship building and developing trust as top teambuilding concerns. Baruch says that one of the most popular teambuilding programs on the current scene is orienteering, a group event that encompasses a myriad of obstacles and goals, including how to work one’s way out of a tough situation.

Orienteering teaches individuals and groups how to develop new skills and test communication efficiency, learn about fundamental geographic prin-

ciples, understand how to find one’s direction and take action, race to specific points, all the while overcoming obstacles and working together as a team to improve productivity.

Gloria DeCoste, head of brand management at Purina, worked with Baruch for an orienteering program to help the company’s marketing team discover new avenues of inspiration for the purpose of rebranding the company.

“Orienteering is the sport of finding your way in the outdoors with little more than a map and compass,” Baruch explains. “For the Purina group of 16 marketing specialists, we constructed a one-day, four-hour event with the goal of helping participants find new directions, literally and figuratively. This

physical activity allowed team members to explore a more creative approach to finding new directions.”

According to Baruch, the first part of this shared experience focuses on exploring the fundamentals of orienteering. He teaches the basics such as how to use a compass, a map, and how the two relate, as well as the difference between true north and magnetic north and how the two norths are related to each other.

The next activity focuses on translating that knowledge into skills. “That’s when the team participants learned how to take a bearing, how to plot a course and how to orient oneself to other objects found outdoors,” explains Baruch. “Then, they are asked to work through a small obstacle course within an area

that’s roughly the size of a football field. Completion of the course awarded participants letters that spelled out a goal of their teambuilding event, such as reconnecting with nature and nature’s essential survival elements. A short debriefing allowed participants to more fully understand what they learned during this segment and how they might apply it to life and work.”

These exercises were well received by the Purina people. “I’m not exaggerating when I say that orienteering over-delivered in many ways. Our team is still talking about our day with Colorado Wilderness Rides and Guides, and we are using much of the shared experience in our current planning for the upcoming year,” says DeCoste.

By Stella Johnson

***“Orienteering is the sport of finding your way in the outdoors with little more than a map and compass. ...a more creative approach to finding new directions.”***

Joshua Baruch, Owner, Manager, Senior Guide  
Colorado Wilderness Rides and Guides, Boulder, CO



### Giving Back

“Corporate teambuilding activities are a natural spin-off for those companies that engage in CSR-friendly incentive trips to faraway places,” claims Christopher Hill, CEO of Hands Up Holidays, a London-based luxury travel company, which specializes in corporate travel, voluntourism and more. “They take a portion of a sales staff that has already demonstrated themselves as top producers and bring them together to bond with each other and the company.”

Hands Up Holidays arranged a 10-day

incentive trip to Cambodia and Vietnam for the top 37 performers for Softcat, a UK-based software reseller with 270 employees. Two of those days were spent renovating classrooms and building a library at a local junior high school in a Cambodian village. Previously, Hands Up Holidays arranged a similar incentive trip to Fiji, which also included a voluntourism component.

Hill explains that the group was divided into smaller teams in order to maximize their effectiveness to achieve the tasks in a limited time frame — an

exercise that required identifying who was best suited for each role. Then, each unit had to work out their own timing, order of activities and division of labor to achieve their assigned goal. Furthermore, the teams had to be cohesive and rely on each other in order to get the library built on time, and there needed to be coordination to ensure that the limited supply of paint was wisely allocated to complete all the classrooms.

Hill adds, “It was also important that the group as a whole bonded, and this took place in the evening’s social activities and also in the interaction with the children at the school, where football and ad hoc games were played with the kids.”

### Tried-and-True

Aveksa, a Waltham, MA-based corporation that provides access governance automation software solutions, employs a very simple and highly effective team-building exercise that involves the show-

ing of the 1949 film classic “12 O’Clock High” starring Gregory Peck. The award-winning movie tells the tale of a tough general who takes over a bomber unit suffering from low morale and whips them into shape.

At Aveksa, the showing of “12 O’Clock High” is a stop-and-start process whereby attendees discuss different aspects of the film such as the challenges, strategies, decision-making and leadership skills.

Aveksa President and CEO Vick Vaishnavi claims, “In business, so often we get lost in the day-to-day aspect of running the business that we forget the more subtle elements that help a company to be successful, such as building a strong leadership team that will not only optimize business operations, but also empower and inspire the entire organization. The “12 O’Clock High” movie exercise is great because for four to six hours we shut down our laptops and BlackBerrys, and watch a movie. The in-

teractive discussion we have around the film does not include direct conversation about what is currently going on in our company. It is strictly about what it means to be a leader. And at the end of the sessions we, as a group, have arrived



***“Often we get lost in the day-to-day aspect...that we forget the more subtle elements that help a company to be successful, such as building a strong leadership team.”***

Vick Vaishnavi, President and CEO  
Aveksa, Waltham, MA

to what that means for our company, which is a very unifying experience.”

Vaishnavi recognizes that effective leaders, as portrayed in the film by the two central characters, can have very different leadership styles — an important lesson for his team members: “One is well-liked by his troops,” he says, “but he

over-identifies with them, which makes it hard for him to make the hard, impartial decisions needed to effectively carry out operations.

“While the troops like the leader, the unit has no real structure and, as a result,

morale is low and they are not getting the job done. The other leader, played by Peck, takes over after the previous leader is transferred to another assignment. Peck knows that he needs to implement a completely different leadership style in order to get the unit operating again. He immediately puts a strict structure

## The 24-Hour Human Wall

Katharine Greis, a senior account executive at Event Architects (EA), a Chicago-based experiential marketing agency, shares her story of the Human Experience Wall — a unique art project they created for client Starcom USA, one of the largest media communications agencies in the U.S. According to Chris Boothe, president and COO of Starcom, Event Architects’ photographers took and collected photos of Starcom employees, creatively manipulated them in a design studio and built a colorful patchwork in the agency’s Chicago headquarters in less than 24 hours to create something simple and meaningful in real time.

### A Creation Comes to Life

The one-day art project showed 1,200 Starcom employees across four cities how an artistic idea can be executed from start to finish in a single day. “To do this, a large 8-by-8 canvas board (right) was set up in the lobby of the client’s building. A photographer was sent around throughout the office and took candid photos of employees on the job, catching most by surprise. The idea was actually the brainchild of Starcom’s marketing communica-

tions team and was coordinated by our team at EA,” says Greis. “People would ask what the photos were for, and the photographer would say ‘an art project.’”

By noon, the photographer had hundreds of photos of employees, office memorabilia and more. A team of designers then began ‘photoshopping’ the pictures with colors, effects and overlays. Photos were then printed and sent down to the creation site in the building’s lobby where they were artistically affixed by an artist to what was by now a blossoming collage. Employees taking lunch breaks or returning from meetings were able to see the creation come to life.

By 5 p.m., the extraordinary collage was completed, and employees learned the next morning the message behind the project. “You can create something truly amazing in one day. All employees were able to interact in some way, either watching the piece being created or being photographed during the day. All employees saw the finished piece at the end of the work day as they left the building. The results were that employees realized that within less than 24 hours, an idea can be developed to fruition —

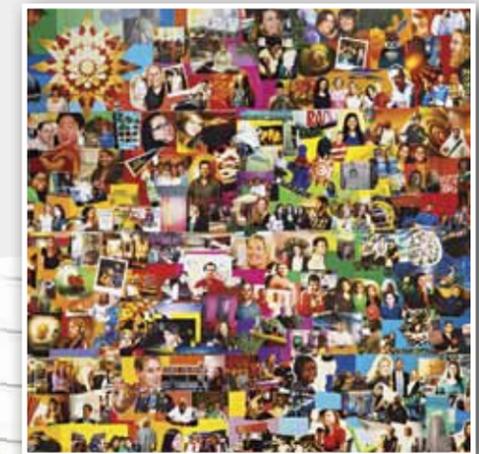
and everyone can be a part of it,” says Greis. “The art piece was replicated for the other three Starcom offices and still sits in the main lobby of the agency’s Chicago headquarters as a reminder for employees everyday on what can be accomplished in a brief amount of time when everyone cooperates and works together.”

### A Visual Reminder

Commenting on this simple yet highly effective team-building event, Boothe says, “The Human Experience wall showcases all of the wonderful, creative and inspiring people, ideas and cultural behaviors that make up the agency. It was very important for us to visualize the concept that although we are four offices — Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles and New York City — across the U.S., we are one agency with a united vision. This project served as a powerful, enduring reminder that we have great capacity to understand people and apply that understanding to our work to make it more fulfilling. Another goal of this project was to show that quality, imagination and artistic ideas can go from start to finish in one day — driven by a clear purpose and inspired by the people at Starcom.”

— SJ

Event Architects created the Human Wall for Starcom USA and demonstrated what can be accomplished in 24 hours when everyone works together.



Photos courtesy of Event Architects

in place, one based on rigorous discipline, while he works to understand the strengths and weaknesses of everyone in the unit. He does not try to be their friend. He knows that he will be forced to make hard decisions about them and cannot let emotional attachments impair his judgment. This style of leadership transcends into the business world.”

Vaishnavi says the leaders in his

cases, management officials that we didn't know before. But, perhaps the biggest payoff, if done correctly, is that teambuilding activities are fun. And, in the current economy, fun goes a long way with many companies operating with slimmed-down staffs, heavy workloads and low morale.”

Indeed, Wilde's company Switch: Liberate Your Brand held its 4th Annual



Teambuilding fun at its best: Switch: Liberate Your Brand closed for a day last fall for their annual field day so that all 110 employees could participate in “silly olympics.”

company have always been enthusiastic about the movie teambuilding exercise. “I think it is very exciting for them to see a clear cut example of what is the right way to lead, and what is the wrong way. I'm sure they see in themselves some traits from both sides of the fence and the examples in the movie help them to build on the positive traits and stop practicing the bad ones.”

### Teambuilding Can Be Fun, Too

There's a fun side to teambuilding as well, reminds Christina Wilde, “Teambuilding requires problem-solving and creative thinking that equate to learning through play, and we all get to walk away having learned something about fellow employees and, in some

Field Day last fall. The company shut down for a day, and all 110 fulltime employees attended the event. “We reserve an exclusive area in a local park and have a full day of activities, including food and ‘adult’ beverages. We had 11 teams of 10 people. Eight primary games were a combination of cerebral and physical activities — kind of a ‘silly olympics’ in a way,” says Wilde.

“For example, ‘human bowling.’ This is an activity where one brave individual climbs inside a 6-foot diameter, cylinder-shaped ball cage and is ‘rolled’ by fellow employees towards 4-foot-tall pins. Or, something simpler, like a ‘facial fusion’ game where the object of the game is to identify a composite image of three different employees.”

Whatever the game, Wilde says Switch's goals for Field Day are:

- **To Walk the Talk.** As an experiential marketing company that engages audiences to explore fun brands by immersing them in sensory experiences, it's imperative for the company to create fun, excitement and engagement that is consistent with its positioning and corporate culture and style.
- **To Connect** through planned interaction between people who normally don't interact back at the office. “We accomplish this through a lottery drawing by department that places a member of each department on a team. While there is not a lot of skill required for these interaction programs, team members still have to work together in order to be successful,” Wilde adds. “It is always interesting to see who rises to a leadership position, who surprises you with a brilliant answer, and who is ultra-competitive.”
- **To Show Our Love.** Top management feels very strongly that Field Day is an opportunity to say thank you to the employees for their hard work and talents. Switch finds the benefits of doing this result in more meaningful relationships built between cross-functional departments and fun for everyone — as well as substantial cash and prize awards. We also award the Best Team Campaign, which aligns with our business purpose. Since we are in the marketing communications business, we want to create a brand essence for each team. There is an award for Best Team Spirit and even attendance awards to ensure that everyone has a shot at a prize.

### Final Thoughts

More than anything else, observes Wilde, “There is no single prescription for effective teambuilding. It has to fit the specific corporate culture and interpersonal dynamics of the group, while challenging comfort zones, fostering camaraderie and enabling fun.” **C&IT**



THE WORLD'S MOST INNOVATIVE CRUISE LINE.  
THE WORLD'S BEST MEETING & INCENTIVE OPTION.



### Why not host your next Corporate Meeting or Incentive Event at sea?

Royal Caribbean International® offers value, ease of planning and a unique experience. We provide everything a land-based resort does, plus so much more. Exhilarating onboard activities, a variety of dining options, Broadway-style shows, complimentary function space and A/V equipment, event customization options, and spacious accommodations all included for one great price – we are the ‘Ultimate Off-Site Destination.’



1-800-762-0458  
RoyalCaribbeanIncentives.com

©2011 Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. Ships' registry: The Bahamas. 11022599 • 2/18/2011

# Learn From Experience

## To Safeguard Attendees

When it comes to meeting security and safety, planners must prepare for the unthinkable and hope that it doesn't happen. That's the approach planners should take to assess and mitigate risks, respond to emergencies and ensure the well-being of attendees. But even the best preparations will not prevent bad things from happening. Planners must still respond to incidents ranging from food poisoning and theft to protestors and fires — even the untimely death of an attendee.

Some incidents can shake the emotional security of attendees, threatening

*“A couple of weeks prior to the event, the team gathers in our conference room and tosses around possible crisis scenarios.”*



Carol Galle, CMP  
President  
Special D Events  
Royal Oak, MI

their ability to hold a successful meeting. That happened at a training meeting for 50 executives and managers of a company in the automotive industry. On the first day of the meeting, held at a hotel in a Midwestern city, an executive complained about feeling ill. “He didn't

show up for a session on the second day, and we tried to contact him. We got no response, so we had the hotel staff enter the room. They found him there, passed away,” says Carol Galle, CMP, president of Royal Oak, MI-based Special D Events, which provides meeting and event planning services for corporations.

Galle and her team put their emergency plan into action and contacted local law enforcement officials. “We sat down with the company and hotel staff, and decided exactly what would be said to attendees. It was important to develop a consistent message and put it out immediately so that everyone was on the same page. Even in the time it took us to do that, there were already rumors spreading. People were concerned about their own safety because they had no idea what caused him to pass away,” says Galle. She met with attendees to explain what happened, answered questions and the meeting continued.

Galle had never before faced such a meeting emergency, and learned something crucial about informing relatives in such situations. “We had an executive who was from the same town as the deceased and knew the family. Our immediate thought was that he would be the one to inform them. But we soon learned from police that wasn't the way to go. They would make the call to the town's



law enforcement, which would then contact the family. Our executive would follow up with a personal call,” says Galle. She noted the procedure in her planning firm's safety and security plans. “We adapt and change our crisis management plans based on experiences using them at meetings and events,” Galle adds.

Galle and her staff use their cumulative knowledge of safety and security to play a serious game of “what if” before each meeting. “A couple of weeks prior to the event, the team gathers in our conference room and tosses around possible crisis scenarios. No suggestion is too outrageous. We quiz each other on how we should handle any emergency. Then we agree on the appropriate response and again update our written document. These mental olympics keep us in shape for any crisis,” says Galle.

Meeting planners are responsible for protecting attendees and meeting property as well as a company's reputation and exposure to financial loss. Every meeting planner should have a basic emergency response plan and adapt it to each meeting, incentive and event, advises Julia Rutherford Silvers, CSEP, consultant, speaker and author of *Risk Management for Meetings and Events* (Butterworth-Heinemann, 2007). “You start with a basic template and keep adding things to your checklist based on lessons learned from each event,” says Rutherford Silvers, who is based in Albuquerque, NM.

Rutherford Silvers says many planners have insufficient safety and security plans or lack them altogether. Another mistake planners often make is to use the same emergency plan for each meeting without performing a risk assessment for each event. “I don't care how many times you've done that particular type of meeting or incentive, you must do an assessment for each program because each one is different,” she adds.

Meeting planners may also fail to assess security and safety from different points of view, especially when making site visits. “Most planners look only at

Photo courtesy of UJET Intelligent Risk Systems

By Derek Reveron

**“As (planners) look at a site, they should imagine what they could steal or get access to, and at what time.”**



**Julia Rutherford Silvers, CSEP**  
Consultant, Speaker, Author  
Albuquerque, NM

sonal injury lawyer’s hat and look at what can cause injuries or accidents,” says Rutherford Silvers. Assessing security from these viewpoints is especially important for planners who don’t hire security consultants, she observes.

#### Outside Advice

While some meeting planners perform their own risk assessment, others hire a security consultant to perform the task. Based on results of the assessment, meeting planners must sometimes consider whether to hire onsite security personnel and decide which duties they should perform. Such decisions depend partly on meeting budgets, says Bruce McIndoe, president, iJET Intelligent Risk Systems, a global intelligence firm

based in Annapolis, MD. “When we work with planners, we help with the budgets for security services if they are appropriate. Having a professional make a recommendation puts it on record that a meeting planner lets management know what is needed for protection and the cost,” says McIndoe.

No matter how tight security budgets are, it is hardly ever a good idea to use volunteer event staff instead of security professionals to guard entrances to rooms that contain equipment, products and other materials. “It’s a good idea until something goes wrong, but you don’t want to be holding a meeting when it does. If budgeting is an issue, hire fewer security personnel and use volunteers for meeting stewarding functions,” says Rutherford Silvers.

Meeting planners who hire outside

security should keep in mind that the quality and variety of services can vary widely. Screen the services carefully and ask questions that include the following: What type of training does the company provide for security personnel? Does training include important skills such as first aid, crisis preparedness, communication skills and physical control of problem individuals? What services does the company provide (onsite security, VIP protection, crisis management and crowd control) that match the needs of a meeting?

What services does the firm perform best and do they match the needs of the meeting? What services does the vendor provide itself, and which ones does it farm out to subcontractors? How thoroughly does the company perform employee background checks, and what areas are covered? Does the firm conduct its own checks or hire another company to perform the function? Has the firm provided security services for similar types of meetings? What were the results? Ask for references. When it comes to hiring a security firm, planners can never ask too many questions, says Rutherford Silvers.

#### Cast a Wide Net

Security and safety measures enacted depend on the type of meeting and its needs, says Jay Klein, CMP, CEO of A-Plus Meetings and Incentives, located in Coral Gables, FL.

Klein speaks from experience. His firm has prepared for and responded to a variety of security-related issues. “We have hired bodyguards for guest speakers and transported VIPs from airports in vehicles with bulletproof glass. I’ve had people have epileptic fits, fall from a staircase and break a hip and get stung by jellyfish. We had a guy have a heart attack while walking down a hallway. One of my people spotted him, called 911 and went with him to the hospital. During an incentive function on a boat, a woman wearing high heels tripped and broke her arm,” says Klein.

Klein also recalls steps taken to protect attendee privacy at a corporate sales meeting: “Competitors were systematically trying to call the rooms of salespeople to take them to dinner and recruit them, so we arranged to have every phone call to members of the group go to my staff to vet the messages,” says Klein.

Such incidents illustrate that safety and security plans should define possible incidents as broadly as possible. According to experts, the plans should include the following basic elements:

- Outline potential responses to incidents such as air travel disruption, bomb threats, natural disasters, theft of equipment or information, controversial companies and speakers, and attendee illnesses and injuries.
- Detail meeting staff responsibilities. Who will head the planning team’s emergency response? What will be the support roles of staff back in the meeting planner’s home office? Who will handle the assessment of damages and loss, and oversee post-meeting follow-up?
- Determine who will communicate to the client, attendees, law enforcement and the public. Know which staffers will handle various duties.
- Include names and phone numbers for hotel security, planning staff, law enforcement agencies, ambulance services and the nearest hospital. Also include contact information for transportation, including airlines, car rental companies and taxis.
- List important documents to keep handy. These include floor plans, maps of the local area and employee room lists with mobile phone numbers and emergency contacts.
- Determine whether speakers and VIPs could be subjects of media coverage



**“Having a professional make a recommendation puts it on record that a meeting planner lets management know what is needed for protection and the cost.”**

**Bruce McIndoe**  
President  
iJET Intelligent Risk Systems  
Annapolis, MD

- Ask the local CVB what other groups are meeting in or near the same hotel. Are any of the groups controversial? Ask local law enforcement officials if any protests are scheduled during meeting dates. Also inquire about crime statistics in the meeting hotel’s neighborhood.
  - Include a space on registration forms for basic information about disabilities, medical conditions, special needs and food allergies.
  - Determine how to protect equipment, company records and proprietary items. Are locked rooms enough or are security guards needed?
- Business success is often based on a calculated risk/reward outcome. But in meeting planning, it’s the elimination of risk that assures a safe and successful event.

**C&IT**

## Remember to Ask These Questions on Your Next Site Visit

A meeting planner makes a site visit to a hotel and inspects the meeting rooms, hotel rooms, ballrooms and function areas. The planner examines the audio-visual and technology equipment, pool area and kitchens. But the planner doesn’t ask about the hotel’s safety and security plans and procedures.

Such a scenario happens all too often, according to experts. “They don’t check to see if standard safeguards are in place. They need to look for vulnerabilities that can be exploited onsite and impact mission-critical items in the meeting program,” says Julia Rutherford Silvers, CSEP consultant, speaker and author of *Risk Management for Meetings and Events*.

Security experts suggest that, during site visits, meeting planners ask several questions about safety and emergency plans. Questioning hotels about security procedures is important because they may vary from property to property. Upscale, luxury, airport, urban and new hotels typically have the best level of security and safety measures, according to a report by Cornell University’s Center for Hospitality Research.

Experts advise that meeting planners cover the following areas during hotel site visits.

- **Emergency and evacuation plans.** “Ask to see a copy. They may not give you the plan due to privacy concerns. But you at least need to have a conversation with them to discuss the salient points so that you

know how to be a partner in security. Don’t be afraid to ask about recent security issues that the property may or may not have reported to local authorities,” says Rutherford Silvers.

- **Staff training.** Determine whether hotel staff receives training in emergency procedures such as first aid, CPR and defibrillator use.
- **Security staffing.** How many hotel security staffers are on duty at any given time? Can any be assigned specifically to cover meetings and events?
- **Loss prevention.** How does the hotel prevent theft, and what procedure does the hotel follow after it occurs? Ask to examine the loss-prevention manual.
- **Access security.** What are the procedures for changing room key codes? How does the hotel restrict access to critical areas such as IT and AC/utilities?
- **Video security technology.** Is the hotel’s video surveillance a traditional closed-circuit system or digital? Does the digital surveillance system employ video analytics, which employs object- and face-recognition technology? Video analytics identifies new and missing objects such as unattended luggage and sends an alarm to security operators. It can also determine if a vehicle is parked where it shouldn’t be, and whether a person who is ejected from the property returns, says Bruce McIndoe, president of Annapolis-based iJET Intelligent Risk Systems.

— DR



Troon Golf chose Talking Stick Resort to host a sales and training meeting for 300 attendees.

Photo courtesy of Troon Golf

# Arizona

## Sunshine and Service Keep Groups Coming Back

Arizona's perpetually sunny weather, unique desert landscape and abundance of outstanding meeting properties and activities go a long way toward attracting group business. But if you had to name the one element that keeps them coming back, it would have to be extraordinary service.

### Success in Scottsdale

Jake Leinenkugel knows how to brew up a successful incentive program. As president (or "Head Beer Dude" as he laughingly says), of the Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company, he brings his top 100 salespeople and their spouses to Scottsdale at the end of March. The "All Leinie Team Event" is so popular that hundreds of salespeople compete to qualify for it each year.

For nearly 10 years, the five-day, four-night program has been held at the 404-room Scottsdale Plaza Resort. Set on 40 acres in the heart of Scottsdale, the resort offers 224 guest rooms and 180 suites. The property also includes five pools, lighted tennis courts, a spa and more than 30,000 sf of meeting space. It is conveniently located just 25 minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

Leinenkugel said the No. 1 reason he brings the program back to The Scottsdale Plaza each year is the people. "Their service level is just exceptional," he explains. "The second thing I really like is the lay of the grounds. You don't feel like you're in a resort. You feel like you're in your own little community, and the grounds are gorgeous. Our people, particularly those from the Midwest, love to hang around the pool at that time of year."

Most of the group's planned meal functions are held at the resort. "We used to go offsite for quite a few of the meals," Leinenkugel says, "but because of their service levels and their preparation of the food, we find it's just as good as any top-notch restaurant. It also alleviates some of the travel that we have to do and get buses for."

The event kicks off with a "Beer Tales" mixer where Leinie beer (naturally) is served. The program also includes an awards dinner. "We also have a morning sales meeting because it's a smart thing to do when you have some of your top sales people around," he adds. "We tell them what the expectations are and the new brand ideas that we have."

After that, Leinenkugel explains, it's all fun in the sun. "They can golf, they can spa or they can shop. We give them money



Photo courtesy of Scottsdale Plaza Resort

The Scottsdale Plaza Resort features stellar service along with its 224 guest rooms and 30,000 sf of meeting space.

and gift cards for all of those things. Then we have a general leisure day where you do what you want to do. You can do balloon rides, you can do desert tours, you can do the things that are available through The Scottsdale Plaza's service desk and their tour guides."

While Leinenkugel acknowledges that he has many other resort choices in the Scottsdale area, he likes the comfort level of knowing where they're going every year. "They've gotten to know what our needs are, and they overdeliver in almost all cases," he says. "We've never had a complaint or incident with any of our guests. It's in a great location, too."

Troon Golf, which manages golf courses throughout the U.S. and in 23 other countries, also chose Scottsdale as the site of its recent sales and training meeting for 300 attendees. The company met at the new Talking Stick Resort, which opened on the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community last year — featuring two Troon-managed golf courses.

The 497-room, 15-story resort, which achieved AAA Four Diamond status in its first year, features five restaurants, five lounges, an open air spa, showroom and 240,000-sf casino. The resort's fine dining restaurant, Orange Sky, is located on the 15th floor and delivers spectacular city, mountain and sunset

By Karen Brost



Photo courtesy of Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain

The Edge Bar at Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain.

views. More than 100,000 sf of indoor and outdoor function space is available at the resort, including the 25,000-sf Salt River Grand Ballroom. The resort is located adjacent to Talking Stick Golf Club, which is managed by Troon.

“It has awesome meeting facilities,” says John Easterbrook, executive vice president of operations for Troon Golf. “There is plenty of room, plenty of foyer space, plenty of open space and many options.” He also liked the fact that the meeting space is separate from the casino area.

Troon also used Degree 270, a lounge on the 14th floor, for a reception. “It has excellent service, and the views for an early evening function are remarkable,” Easterbrook notes. “It was very impressive for our out-of-town guests. Attendees who used the other restaurants were also very impressed. It was very solid all the way around as it relates to their

*“(The Scottsdale Plaza Resort has) gotten to know what our needs are, and they overdeliver in almost all cases. We’ve never had a complaint or incident with any of our guests.”*



**Jake Leinenkugel, President**  
Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company, Chippewa Falls, WI

food and beverage. They did a fantastic job with service for 300 on our final night awards dinner. It’s not easy to pull off a plated dinner for that many folks, and they did it extremely well.

“Honestly, the overall reviews were as good as they have been in the history of our conference,” Easterbrook adds. “I think the meeting space had a lot to do with that. They have an excellent team all the way around. The price/value relationship for our attendees was very high.”

Salt River Fields at Talking Stick opened this spring just

across the expressway from the resort. It is the new spring training home of the Colorado Rockies and Arizona Diamondbacks baseball teams. The venue, which will be open year-round, contains multiple special event areas that can accommodate up to 400 guests.

Scenic views are often a feature planners look for when searching for a luxury property in Scottsdale, and Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Resort and Spa delivers on that requirement. Nestled on 53 acres on the north slope of Camelback Mountain, the resort offers panoramic views of Paradise Valley below. Included in the resort’s 9,000 square feet of indoor/outdoor meeting space is The Views, a 3,500-sf event venue that features floor-to-ceiling windows and a large wraparound terrace. Included in the resort’s 5,500 sf of outdoor space are two private lawns and a patio, all with inspiring views. Other group options include XII, a new private dining room with views of a working kitchen; and Praying Monk, a new year-round patio with retractable glass walls on one side for inclement weather. Guest accommodations include 105 luxury casitas, as well as seven private homes set on the mountainside above the resort. Sartori Wellness Retreats can be custom-designed as corporate group teambuilding programs centered on adventure, wellness activities or stress management.

### Giving Back

Since 1996, Arizona’s Desert Events has been taking groups on nature and historical tours of the desert in north Scottsdale. “It is an off-road tour,” explains Doreen O’Connell, the company’s owner. “Our tour is very educational, but it’s also very entertaining. The guides are very funny. People end up coming back learning a lot about the desert, but also come back laughing because they’ve had a great time.”

The company is now offering a Corporate Responsibility Program, which combines its traditional tour experience with an opportunity to help preserve the Sonoran Desert. Attendees are picked up at their hotel in custom off-road vehicles and transported to state trust land — or anywhere help is needed — where they spend up to two hours maintaining trails and completing other needed tasks. The projects are chosen based on the age range and capability of the group. Tools, equipment and work gloves are provided, and refreshments are included in the cost.

O’Connell is always gratified to see visitors’ reactions to the Arizona desert. “People think a desert is desolate and that there’s nothing there, but when we take them out and they see the amount of vegetation we have and how unique and beautiful it is, they’re really amazed.” She adds, “This program is very important to us because it gives us the opportunity to give back to the desert that gives so much to us. We have the pleasure

of introducing people from all over the world to its amazing beauty.”

### Phoenix Continues to Rise

Following on the heels of the \$600 million expansion of the Phoenix Convention Center, downtown Phoenix continues to add more options for meeting and convention attendees.

In March, The Westin Phoenix Downtown opened for business. Located just a short walk from the Phoenix Convention Center, the hotel offers 242 oversized guest rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows. Other room amenities include wireless Internet, a relaxation and work area with sofa and desk, and a Jack Pack that allows guests to connect their laptops and other personal electronic devices to the room’s 40-inch flat-screen television. More than 15,000 sf of event space is available, including the 3,000-sf Copper Ballroom.

In recent years, downtown Phoenix has been short on dining and shopping venues, but CityScape, a mixed use development, has changed that situation by bringing more than 25 businesses to the area. Recent additions include the upscale Lucky Strike bowling lanes, Rasputin Vodka Bar, Oakville Grocery and an urban grill called The Arrogant Butcher, which offers private event space. CityScape is also the home of Stand Up Live, a 600-seat comedy club.

The city’s light rail system, Metro Light Rail, makes it easy



The new Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix has outdoor and indoor spaces for group events, as well as a 299-seat theater.

for visitors to travel to a number of downtown attractions including Chase Field, US Airways Center, the Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona Science Center and the Heard Museum. It also stops at the Phoenix Convention Center. An extension is now under construction that will connect Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport to the light rail system.

The largest hotel in Phoenix, the 950-room JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort & Spa, recently completed a \$16 million



**John Easterbrook, Executive V.P., Operations**  
Troon Golf, Scottsdale, AZ

*“Honestly, the overall reviews (of Talking Stick) were as good as they have been in the history of our conference. ...The price/value relationship for our attendees was very high.”*

renovation of its guest rooms, suites and corridors to reflect the colors and textures of the desert landscape. The resort offers 240,000 sf of indoor and outdoor function space.

### Activities Abound

To help groups make the most of their visit to Phoenix, the AAA Four Diamond Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs Resort has an in-house destination management company. Biltmore Destination Services can plan a wide range of group activities, from horseback rides and river floats to cultural tours and wine tastings. It also offers an extensive list of teambuilding activities, including a Chili Cook-off, Wild West Olympics, and City Slickers Cattle Drive. Another unique option is the Tomcar GPS Hunt. Tomcars are off road vehicles that look like oversized go carts. They were developed by the military to serve as a cross between ATVs and SUVs.

The newly renovated Spanish-Mediterranean style Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs is located just 20 minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. Resort amenities include a spa, championship golf course and Falls Water Village, a three-acre oasis containing two pools and a 138-foot waterslide. Six more pools are located throughout the property, which also offers more than 65,000 sf of meeting space and 584 suites.

One of the newest cultural venues in Phoenix is the \$250 million Musical Instrument Museum (MIM), which opened last year. The 190,000-sf museum enables visitors to see and hear thousands of musical instruments from around the globe. It also contains an Artist Gallery that features famous instruments such as the Steinway piano on which John Lennon composed “Imagine,” and Carlos Santana’s custom Yamaha guitar.

MIM offers a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces for private events and can accommodate up to 1,000 guests for a reception or up to 200 guests for a sit-down dinner. The museum also has a 299-seat theater that has excellent acoustics.

### Tales From Tucson

Heather Laible, events manager for Audigy Group LLC in Vancouver, WA, found her meeting success in Tucson. She

planned a 220-person training program for audiologists at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in January. “We do 12–14 events throughout the year across the country, and we wanted to go somewhere sunny. We were originally looking at Phoenix. By coincidence, I had called Loews for a different event, and they asked me what other events we were running. I told them about our Arizona event, and she had a deal that we just couldn’t pass up.”

Audigy’s event draws attendees from throughout the country. “We do this particular event four to five times a year, and it was the highest attendance we’ve ever had,” Laible says. “We were shocked, because the Tucson airport is a little more difficult to get to, but it ended up being that it wasn’t a problem.” Tucson International Airport (TIA) is served by eight airlines that offer nonstop service to 15 destinations and connecting service worldwide.

“Our event is a two-day event on a Friday and Saturday,” she continues. “Typically, half the people leave on Saturday after training, but 95 percent of the people stayed that last night. It was great because that added more rooms to our master account for our cumulative (total). That was fantastic on the budget.”

The 398-room Loews Ventana Canyon offers scenic views of the Catalina Mountains along with two PGA golf courses, two pools, lighted tennis courts and a spa. The property has 37,000 sf of meeting space.

“Tucson is just really beautiful, and the property itself was just gorgeous,” Laible says. “It was great for us because the meeting space that we used was set a little bit away from the hotel so it was kind of like we had our own private event going on. It was about a four-minute walk to the meeting space and it was really nice every day to be able to get outside.” She explained that there is additional meeting space in the main building of the resort.

“My favorite part about the property was the people,” Laible adds. “In the whole history of my career, I have never worked with a staff so enthusiastic about their jobs. Everywhere I went, they knew me by name, they knew my staff by name, and they knew who was with our group. The service was just phenomenal. It was a perfect pairing for us because the program that we teach is based on customer service. (The service) was really parallel with what we were teaching, so it was a great example for our attendees.”

“The weather was great,” Laible continues. “I had a lot of attendees who woke up early to do the hiking trails.” She used Loews’ in-house DMC to schedule shuttle buses for offsite

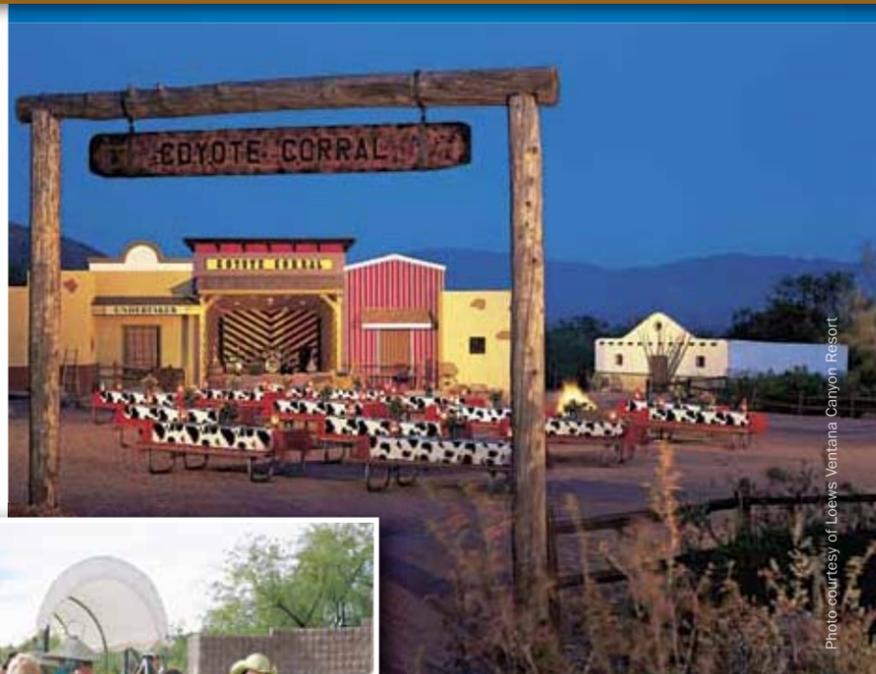


Photo courtesy of Loews Ventana Canyon Resort



Attendees can get a true taste of Western culture and cuisine at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson.

dinners. “We went down to the downtown district to do dinners, and they orchestrated all of that for us. We got to experience a little bit more of Tucson by going offsite. They also did all of our transfers to and from the airport. That was my favorite logistical part of it. I didn’t have to worry about any of it. I turned it over to them, and they took care of it.”

The 428-room Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort has received Green Certification from the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association. The property has a long list of eco-friendly initiatives, including the use of low-voltage light fixtures, low-flow showerheads and composting. The resort, which has 31 lighted tennis courts, even recycles tennis ball cans and donates used tennis balls to schools and care facilities.

In addition to its extensive tennis facilities, the Hilton Tucson El Conquistador offers 36 holes of golf as well as hiking, biking and horseback riding. The property, which occupies 500 acres in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains, offers more than 100,000 sf of indoor and outdoor function space. One of the property’s event spaces, Last Territory, is a Western-style venue that gives groups the feeling of going off property without having to incur the cost of bus transportation.

The Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau is offering special savings based on peak room nights for meetings booked and actualized in 2011. The savings range from \$1,000 for 25–50 rooms for a minimum of two nights to \$10,000 for 201 rooms or more. The savings triple for meetings booked for three consecutive years starting in 2011. Complete details are available at [www.tucsononus.com](http://www.tucsononus.com).

The easy-to-remember date of 11/11/11 will mark the opening of Tucson’s newest casino property, the 215-room Casino Del Sol Resort, Spa & Conference Center. Owned and operated by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, the new resort will offer more than 65,000 sf of indoor and outdoor meeting space, including an 18,000-sf grand ballroom and a 5,000-seat open-air concert venue. It also will have a pool, spa and fitness center. The resort is now accepting bookings for early 2012.



*“The service was just phenomenal. It was a perfect pairing for us because the program that we teach is based on customer service.”*

**Heather Laible, Events Manager**  
Audigy Group, Vancouver, WA

### Stunning Sedona

With its breathtaking red rock views, Sedona, located two hours north of Phoenix, provides a tranquil setting for executive retreats and incentive programs. The area is known for its extensive network of hiking trails, and jeep tours are also a popular choice for visitors.

L’Auberge de Sedona recently completed a \$25 million renovation and expansion project that included the addition of 64 new or redesigned cottages, a new guest-arrival building, pool, redesigned spa and a new restaurant, The Veranda. The luxury resort, which occupies 11 acres on the banks of Oak Creek, offers 89 lodge and cottage accommodations and 3,500 sf of meeting space.

Both L’Auberge de Sedona and Enchantment Resort & Mii Amo

Spa earned spots on the *Conde Nast Traveler* Gold List for 2011. The list represents the world’s finest properties based on nominations by 25,000 of the magazine’s readers. Enchantment Resort, which is nestled on 70 acres at the base of Boynton Canyon, features 218 casita-style accommodations, 33,000 sf of indoor and outdoor meeting space, and Mii Amo, a destination spa.

As Leinenkugel has found, having one great meeting experience in Arizona makes it easy to return to the same resort again and again. Laible discovered the same thing after her experience at Loews Ventana Canyon. “We have a two-year contract for 2012 and 2013,” she states. “We loved it that much.” **C&IT**

discover extraordinary meetings.  
And find inspiration in a setting like no other.

**SANCTUARY**  
camelback mountain  
resort and spa

5700 E. McDonald Drive • Scottsdale, AZ • 800.245.2051 • [sanctuaryaz.com](http://sanctuaryaz.com)

# Las Vegas

In May 1897, upon hearing public rumors of his own demise, Mark Twain famously said, "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

## Energizing, Engaging Meetings That Make a Big Splash



The 2011 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit models join Las Vegas Mayor Oscar B. Goodman in renaming a portion of The Strip to Swimsuit Boulevard.

Photo by Michael Loccisano/Getty Images

The same sentiment could be righteously proclaimed today by Las Vegas, almost two years after a scathing report in *Time* magazine dismissed it as a dying wasteland of real estate foreclosures, massive unemployment and a collapsing meeting-and-convention industry.

Despite the unusually harsh setback Las Vegas endured, it still suffered proportionately, given its hefty size, right alongside every other lesser meeting destination in the U.S. during an unprecedented and protracted market downturn. Today, however, given its unique infrastructure and almost unparalleled range of resources, as well as its solid reputation for bottom-line value combined with exemplary service, the city is reasserting its stature as one of the most popular places in the country to host a meeting.

"We're in full-blown recovery mode," says Chris Meyer, CEM, CMP, vice president of sales at the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority (LVCVA). "I had predicted two years ago, in the midst of the crisis, that 2011 would be a pretty good year for us. And so far, that prediction is playing out quite nicely. Corporate business is up significantly. Our trade shows have been seeing double-digit increases in attendance. Show floors are growing in size. Things are good."

That comes as no surprise to planners who know and use the destination.

"There's just so much opportunity in Las Vegas to do things," says Christine Rosa, New York-based executive director of event marketing and talent relations for *Sports Illustrated* and *Golf Digest* magazines. As a result, Las Vegas has be-

come the annual home of the high-profile global launch event of *SI's* annual swimwear issue each February, a two-day media soiree that draws 2,000 attendees and is planned by Rosa and her longtime right-hand person, Kristen Leoce. "Las Vegas is a melting pot of culture and events, as well as entertainment," says Rosa, who hosted this year's swimsuit event at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. "As a destination, it has the sun, the golf courses, the fine dining. And what we do there has nothing to do with gambling. It's just about what's going on in the city. We go there and take advantage of those unique opportunities, whether it's a hotel, a restaurant or a retail store."

### Easy Access, Bottom-Line Value

Kazhal Luther, head of events and logistics at Costa Mesa, CA-based Paul Mitchell Advanced Education, a national beauty school franchise operation under the banner of the global hair-care giant, uses Las Vegas two or three times a year for a major meeting or event. "We use Vegas because it's such an easy place to stage a convention," says Luther, who heads a four-person team that plans several hundred meetings a year. In February, she hosted a three-day, two-night "future professionals" conference at Caesars Palace for 2,800 beauty school students and industry superstars from all over the U.S. "It's easy to fly into, no matter where you're coming from. And it's great in terms of cost, which is always a concern of our franchisees."

Laura Johnson, senior vice president of product strategy in the Atlanta office of Westin, FL-based Ultimate Software, agrees that consistent value is an enduring benefit of booking Las Vegas. She hosted her meeting there a decade ago. She's been going back every year since. In March, for the third consecutive year, she hosted the company's annual customer conference, a three-day, two-night meeting for 1,000 attendees, at landmark MGM Resorts International property Bellagio. Ultimate Software has since agreed to go back for the next five years.

"Las Vegas is a very economical destination," Johnson says. "And not just for the

airfares, but also for the quality of the hotel rooms that you get for the price. We chose and will continue to work with Bellagio because of the high quality of the hotel rooms, the restaurants, the shopping, spa and entertainment — all of the key amenities that appeal to our attendees."

At the same time, says George Thurman, founder and CEO of 12-year-old PREMCOR, an independent Atlanta-based meet-

## SET FOR SUCCESS

It's the little things that add up to a great meeting. From inspiring spaces and healthful menus to thoughtful attention to details, we'll set you up for clear-thinking productivity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE A RESERVATION, PLEASE VISIT [WESTIN.COM/LASVEGAS](http://WESTIN.COM/LASVEGAS) OR CALL 702-836-5900

**THE WESTIN**  
CASUARINA  
HOTEL, CASINO & SPA  
LAS VEGAS



spg\*  
Starwood Preferred Guest

©2011 Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. All Rights Reserved. SPG, Preferred Guest, Westin and their logos are the trademarks of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., or its affiliates.

By John Buchanan

***“What we do there has nothing to do with gambling. ... We go there and take advantage of those unique opportunities, whether it’s a hotel, a restaurant or a retail store.”***



**Christine Rosa**, Executive Director of Event Marketing and Talent Relations  
*Sports Illustrated, Golf Magazine, New York, NY*

1.9 million sf of exhibit space, in 16 exhibit halls that can be separated and configured with movable walls. A total of 241,536 sf of meeting space includes 144 meeting rooms ranging in capacity from 20 to 2,500 attendees. Another advantage is proximity — LVCC is located just about three miles from the airport and Strip hotels.

The Mandalay Bay Convention Center, located within the 3,220-room Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, ranks high among the world’s premier meeting-and-convention complexes. It features 1.7 million sf of exhibit space, in eight individual exhibit halls ranging from 48,822 to 576,593 sf, with 250,942 sf of meeting space that can be configured from six ballrooms ranging in size from 10,234 to 100,014 sf.

With more than 1.8 combined million sf of exhibit and meeting space, the Sands Expo and Convention Center is another of the country’s largest private facilities. It adjoins The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino and The Palazzo Las Vegas.

**New and Noteworthy**

Known for constantly reinventing itself, Las Vegas unveiled major new properties at the height of the recession. They included the much-heralded CityCenter, which features the 4,004-room Aria Resort & Casino, with 300,000 sf of meeting space, and 1,495-room, all-suite Vdara Hotel & Spa, as well as 390-room The M Resort Spa and Casino.

Today, more than a year later, the city can point to the first wave of post-recession new hotel openings and major renovations.

ing and event planning firm, Las Vegas offers an important and relatively unique advantage not obvious at first glance. “The way the major meeting properties are designed, a meeting is pretty much sequestered — in a destination hotel,” says Thurman, who hosted 1,800 attendees for a four-day, three-night automotive conference at The Mirage last October, as one of two annually recurring meetings he plans in Las Vegas. “Although it may look like a transient hotel, it’s actually planned as a destination hotel for meeting attendees. They can get everything they need or want under one roof. They don’t have to leave. And you have such a large and eclectic combination of dining, entertainment, nightlife, spas and other amenities.”

The result? Las Vegas is a draw, across a broad demographic spectrum — including for high-end groups.

“My guys all earn six-figure incomes,” says Rob Linden, Burlington, MA-based senior vice president of sales, the Americas, for medical manufacturer LeMaitre Vascular Inc. The company hosted its annual four-day, three-night North American sales meeting in January at Paris Las Vegas, one of the eight major properties operated by Las Vegas Meetings by Caesars Entertainment. “And they’re pampered. So, as a destination, I want something that will really get them excited and motivate them. And Las Vegas does that. Everybody was very energized to have a great meeting, then go hit the streets and have another great year like we did in 2010.”



***“We’re in full-blown recovery mode. ...Corporate business is up significantly. Our trade shows have been seeing double-digit increases in attendance.”***

**Chris Meyer**, CEM, CMP, V.P. Sales  
Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority

In February, Dolce Hotels debuted the 349-room Ravella at Lake Las Vegas, located 17 miles from The Strip on the site of the former Ritz-Carlton Lake Las Vegas. The new resort, which includes a pair of marinas and a Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course, features 39,000 sf of meeting and event space, including Pontevecchio Pavilion, which overlooks scenic Lake Las Vegas.

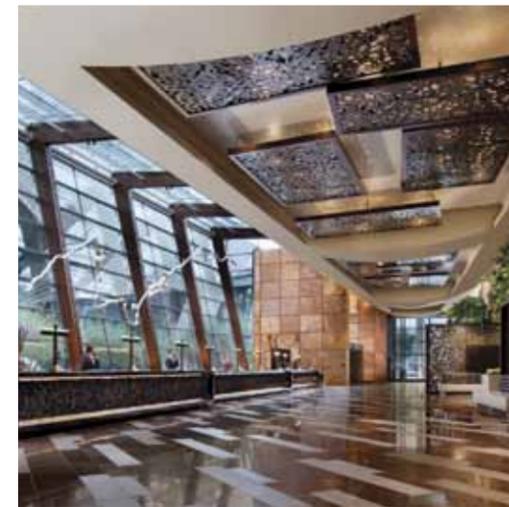
Meanwhile, Aston Hotels & Resorts has taken over the 347-room, all-suite Montelago Village at Lake Las Vegas, with a combined 16,473 sf of meeting space. The third major meeting resort in the tony community is the 493-room Loews Lake Las Vegas, with 47,000 sf of meeting space.

New owner K Hotels has completed a multimillion-dollar

**Convention Facilities**

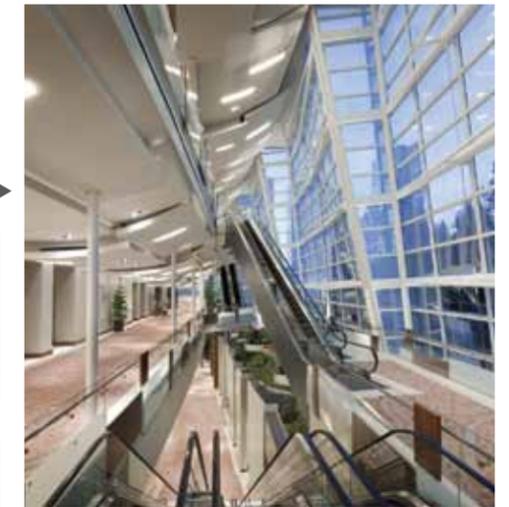
Every year, Las Vegas hosts some of the largest conventions and consumer shows in the country, whether it’s the annual convention of the National Association of Broadcasters or the Consumer Electronics Show. As a result, it has state-of-the-art infrastructure that can easily accommodate even the largest corporate trade shows, conferences and events. In fact, three of its facilities — the Las Vegas Convention Center, Mandalay Bay Convention Center, and Sands Expo and Convention Center — rank by size among the country’s top 10.

The venerable Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC) is one of the largest and most modern facilities in the U.S., with 3.2 million total sf of exhibit and meeting space. LVCC features more than



◀ Behind the reception desk hangs Silver River by world-renowned artist Maya Lin. The use of reclaimed silver expresses ARIA’s commitment to sustainability.

Natural light illuminates all three levels of our 300,000-square-foot convention and meeting facility. ▶



# Experience innovation before the meeting begins.

When you book a meeting at ARIA Resort & Casino at CityCenter™ Las Vegas, you’re part of a bold new way of thinking. Come to a place where ingenuity extends from LEED® Gold certification to three levels of convention space illuminated by refreshing natural light. From the dynamic CityCenter location to individually tailored service, an eye-opening experience awaits you at this AAA Five Diamond winning resort.

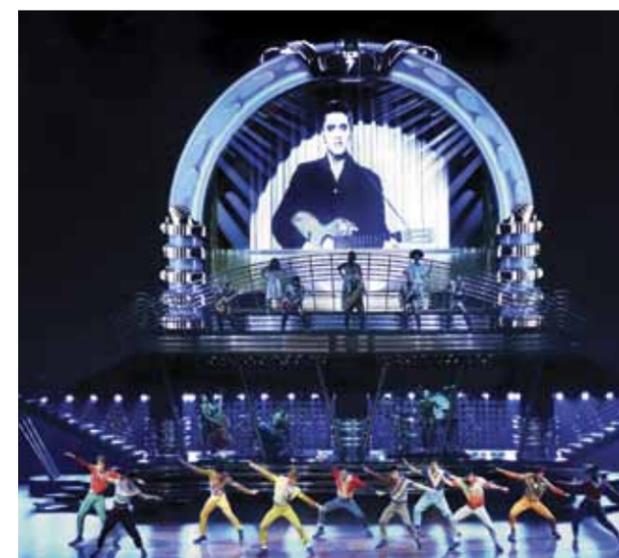


The Heart of CityCenter  
ariaslasvegas.com

Call us today at 866.718.2489 or email us: meetings@ariaslasvegas.com.



▶ The Spa & Salon at ARIA offers a lavish way to unwind and re-energize between business meetings or just for pleasure.



▲ Viva ELVIS™ by Cirque du Soleil® is an unforgettable fusion of dance, acrobatics and live music. Experience a tribute to the life and music of a star forever tied to Las Vegas.



▲ Four ballrooms ranging from 19,871 to 51,225 square feet and 38 meeting rooms provide a premium meeting experience with a unique blend of distinctive décor and advanced technology.

renovation of 2,885-room Treasure Island, with 18,000 sf of meeting space.

After halting completion during the recession, Caesars Palace last year completed its much-anticipated new Octavius Tower, featuring 665 rooms and 17 suites. In more recent Caesars news, Nobu, the super-upscale sushi restaurant brand created by Nobu Matsuhisa and Robert De Niro, will develop its first Nobu boutique hotel in a tower at Caesars, just as Four Seasons pioneered the hotel-within-a-hotel concept with four floors of Mandalay Bay.

The 2,444-room Stratosphere Las Vegas has completed a \$20 million renovation that “reimagined” the eclectic property, with its famous observation tower.

The Tropicana, a Las Vegas icon for decades, is completing a massive \$125 million South Beach-inspired renovation begun last year by its new owners, who are intent on restoring it to its past glory and market status. Changes include a fresh redesign of every hotel room and suite, the casino, the conference center and exhibition hall, several new restaurants, bars, a new poker room,

**“It’s easy to fly into, no matter where you’re coming from. And it’s great in terms of cost, which is always a concern of our franchisees.”**

**Kazhal Luther**, Head of Events and Logistics  
Paul Mitchell Advanced Education  
Costa Mesa, CA



a new race and sports book, and a new spa and fitness center.

Wynn Las Vegas — cited by many as the gold standard of Las Vegas hotel product, along with its newer sister property, Encore — is in the final stages of a \$99 million renovation. The property is scheduled to renovate all 2,716 rooms by the end of 2011. Rooms will feature new carpet, wallpaper, furniture and finishes. Wynn Las Vegas recently received its fifth consecutive AAA Five Diamond Award. Together, the two hotels provide 4,750 rooms and 260,000 sf of meeting space. Wynn also offers an 18-hole golf course.

Harrah’s Las Vegas has completed a renovation of its 25,000 sf of meeting space and Bally’s Las Vegas has remodeled its Grand Ballroom and Event Center.

Don’t forget the noteworthy venues off The Strip: One gem suited for small to mid-sized meetings is the Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa, offering a tranquil retreat from The 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.

## Unique Venues

For meeting planners looking for something different when it comes to venues, Las Vegas offers a diverse and eclectic range of options, from the intimate fine art gallery at Bellagio — the only one on The Strip — to Stratosphere Tower, to the fabled Fantasy Suites at The Palms Hotel & Casino.

The big news this year, however, is the new Meet Las Vegas, a three-story, state-of-the-art meeting and event venue that includes training/educational facilities. The first floor features 5,371 sf of event and exhibition space, a full-service kitchen and three street entrances. It can host 1,136 attendees reception-style. The 4,816 sf second floor features three individual meeting rooms totaling 2,782 sf and can host 417 attendees for a reception-style event. The third floor features a multimedia training and educational center with two computer-based classrooms with 26 and 22 work stations. The facility also includes a 1,076-sf boardroom-style space, as well as a 752-sf space with 65-inch plasma TV and projection for presentations or teleconferencing.

Another new option, pioneered by the LVCVA and touted by Meyer, is Nellis Air Force Base, one of the largest and most important facilities of its kind in the world. “For years, we’ve partnered with them for the annual Las Vegas Air Show,” Meyer says. “But now we have the opportunity to leverage the facility for groups and show them the fascinating stuff that goes on there and things like the latest aircraft. It’s just another example of the unique opportunities that Las Vegas offers.”

Day in and night out, however, one of the top draws when it comes to unique venues is the city’s always evolving batch of exclusive nightclubs and lounges. “The newer nightclubs at the major casino hotels are always popular as offsite venues,” says Francine McKanna, DMCP, president of PRA Destination Management Las Vegas.

The newest is Chateau Nightclub & Gardens at Paris Las Vegas, a two-story, 40,000-sf complex featuring six bars, a rooftop dance floor and Parisian gardens that opened in March.

RiRa Las Vegas is a new and authentic Irish pub opened on St. Patrick’s Day inside The Shoppes at Mandalay Bay.

In March, as a highlight of her customer conference, Johnson hosted an opening night reception at The Bank, a flagship club within Bellagio. “That was a really special night for our customers,” says Johnson, who arranged a buyout.

Although the city offers dozens of such plush, fun venues, one of the most spectacular is the Foundation Room at The House of Blues atop Mandalay Bay, says Meyer. “It looks straight up The Strip,” he says. “It’s one of the best views you’ll find in Las Vegas.”

Meanwhile, the innovation and new names never stop coming. At the newly renovated Tropicana, a Nikki Beach Club outpost will make its debut later this year. The latest location from the trendy nightlife brand that started in South Beach Miami and then spread to places such as St. Tropez, Nikki Beach at

# MAKE IT PERSONAL.

THE BEST INVESTMENT IN YOUR COMPANY’S FUTURE IS FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS. ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY WILL NEVER REPLACE A HANDSHAKE, A CONVERSATION, OR AN IDEA SHARED.

Venetian | Palazzo Meetings® has hosted the biggest trade shows to the most private boardroom meetings and earned *Meetings & Conventions* magazine’s Gold Key Elite and Gold Platter Elite awards year after year.

The Venetian® and the Sands® Expo are LEED Gold Existing Buildings and The Palazzo® is LEED Silver New Construction. Our Las Vegas master-planned development holds the distinction of being the largest ‘green’ building on the planet.

With five-diamond, all-suite accommodations, world-renowned restaurants, the best shows on the Strip, and sustainable practices that set us apart, you’ll instantly realize why your event belongs with Venetian | Palazzo Meetings.

## THE VENETIAN® | THE PALAZZO®

MEETINGS

venetianpalazzomeetings.com

888.283.6384



*“Although it may look like a transient hotel, it’s actually planned as a destination hotel for meeting attendees. They can get everything they need or want under one roof.”*



**George Thurman**, CEO and Founder  
PREMCOR, Atlanta, GA

Tropicana will feature a restaurant, outdoor café and bar, swim-up blackjack, sand volleyball courts and a private island in the center of the tropical pool. The beach club will also include an outdoor concert space where Tropicana will provide world-class Las Vegas nightlife entertainment, including some of the biggest names in the world.

Meanwhile, an existing option favored by McKanna as a unique venue is the penthouse suites at Trump International Hotel Las Vegas. “For small groups up to about 50 attendees, we combine a limousine tour of The Strip with a helicopter tour from Maverick Helicopters, then a reception in a penthouse suite at Trump. That makes a very special, memorable evening,” she says.

Another venue McKanna likes is the NASCAR circuit facility, Las Vegas Motor Speedway. “A neat thing you can do there is stage an antique car race, in which attendees get to drive, then host a dinner in one of the garages,” McKanna says. “It’s a fun and fascinating experience.”

### Dining and Entertainment

“The dining and entertainment scene in Las Vegas is a big draw for our attendees,” says Linden. “Our post-meeting surveys from the event this year show that the meals, the entertainment and the nightlife not only topped anything we’ve ever done here — but also at any company our people ever worked for before.”

Culinary highlights of this year’s sales meeting were Mon Ami Gabi, the flagship French bistro at Paris Las Vegas, and Bally’s Steakhouse, at the nearby sister property from Las Vegas Meetings by Caesars Entertainment.

Because each of the major meeting hotels now offers such a compelling and varied list of dining options, featuring a mix of celebrity chefs, internationally celebrated brands and types of cuisine, traditional dine-around programs have been on the wane, McKanna says.

Instead, hotel food-and-beverage executives negotiate cost-effective packages that deliver plenty of options for the meeting planner and attendees, while also maximizing the hotel’s revenues and profits by keeping everything on-property.

And the new entrants keep arriving. A trio of new restaurants has recently made their debut at Aria, the flagship hotel within the landmark CityCenter complex developed by MGM Resorts

International and opened in late 2009. They are Todd English Pub; Beso, owned by actress Eva Longoria; and an upscale, eponymous tapas bar from Spanish superstar chef Julian Serrano.

A 30,000-sf Sugar Factory American Brasserie made its debut at Paris Las Vegas in March. The complex includes a restaurant, retail store and Chocolate Lounge.

Another hot new restaurant is La Cave at Wynn, launched by restaurateur Michael Morton and featuring chef Bill DeMarco’s innovative “small plates” that are expertly paired with wines for a diverse, unique dining experience. “It’s mostly American cuisine, and the food is great,” says Meyer. “And they have an excellent wine bar and rotate selling 48 wines by the glass.”

While newcomers such as La Cave flourish, so do older favorites that represent the entire culinary spectrum. For this year’s SI swimsuit launch, for example, Rosa hosted a luncheon event at Mexican hotspot Diablo’s Cantina at Monte Carlo Las Vegas Resort and Casino.

Yet, despite the dominance of the hotel restaurants, popular new local eateries come along every year. Among McKanna’s current favorites is Mundo, located in the World Market Center

*“My guys all earn six-figure incomes. And they’re pampered. So, as a destination, I want something that will really get them excited and motivate them.”*



**Rob Linden**, Senior V.P. of Sales, the Americas  
LeMaitre Vascular, Burlington, MA

complex north of The Strip and serving upscale Mexican cuisine. Another new option is a fun seafood house Monstah Lobstah, located in Henderson.

Another, more well-established local restaurant popular with planners, just minutes off The Strip, is Brio Tuscan Grille, located in the Towne Square complex and serving superb Italian cuisine in an upscale, energetic space.

### The Show Goes On

Matching the dining scene for allure to both meeting planners and attendees is an entertainment and nightlife scene almost unmatched anywhere else on earth. Whether it’s Celine Dion, Jay Leno, Blue Man Group or one of seven acclaimed presentations from Cirque du Soleil, Las Vegas offers something sensational for every taste.

Newest among the perennially celebrated Cirque productions are “Viva Elvis” at Aria and “Criss Angel Believe” at Luxor Hotel &

# We do all of our small meetings the same. Big.

Even if you need just a little space, we’ll treat you like a big shot. With over 21,000 square feet of brand new and remodeled meeting space — and amenities — our event possibilities are virtually endless.

newyorknewyork.com  
1.888.689.1797

NEW YORK NEW YORK™  
LAS VEGAS HOTEL & CASINO



Casino. "And even the older Cirque shows, especially 'The Beatles Love' at The Mirage and 'Ka' at the MGM Grand, remain very popular with groups," says McKanna.

But the big news for 2011 is Celine Dion's March return to Caesars Palace, to reprise her earlier stint several years ago as one of the most critically acclaimed and wildly popular runs in Las Vegas history.

Wynn has also debuted the new show "Dance with Me," which features an 18-piece orchestra and a live dance interpretation of the classic songs of Frank Sinatra, featuring digitally remastered recordings and the latest theatrical technology. "It's one of the most amazing theatrical experiences you could ever have," says Meyer. "And the fact that we have something else new and innovative and highly entertaining like that demonstrates again that our entertainment scene is always evolving. And that's important for the many corporate clients who bring more than one meeting here every year. We always have something fresh and new."

"The Las Vegas Mob Experience," which opened in March at

***"For small groups up to about 50 attendees, we combine a limousine tour of The Strip with a helicopter tour from Maverick Helicopters, then a reception in a penthouse suite at Trump. That makes a very special, memorable evening."***

**Francine McKanna, DMCP, President  
PRA Destination Management Las Vegas**



the Tropicana, is a highly interactive, immersive experience — a journey through the history of organized crime that showcases more than 1,000 artifacts, memorabilia, photos and videos of organized crime ever assembled.

When it comes to private entertainment for events, Las Vegas also offers many fun and creative options, from comedians and magicians to jugglers and ventriloquists, with just about everything else imaginable somewhere in between.

One popular option pitched by McKanna is an evening with the Rat Pack — celebrity impersonators who bring Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. to life reminiscent of the early glory years of The Strip. The show features entertaining content, which can be customized to a group's mission or message.

## Golf

Given its other high-profile amenities, it's no surprise that Las Vegas can claim some of the best golf courses in the world. It offers a total of 56, Meyer reports.

"Golf is very important to a lot of our corporate meeting customers," he says. "That's because more and more in today's business world, companies are looking to get face time with key customers, important vendors or suppliers, or any other person

who is important to their business. And golf provides an intimate experience that allows you to get that done."

The globally acclaimed 18-hole, par-70 course at Wynn, designed by Tom Fazio and Steve Wynn and featuring dramatic elevations, waterfalls, streams and a forest, is the only course on The Strip. It is generally considered the best in town — and one of the best on the planet. It is only available to groups staying in the hotel.

Not far down Las Vegas Boulevard, and a contender for the title of best links in an informed conversation, is Bali Hai Golf Club, featuring an 18-hole, par-71 course designed by Lee Schmidt in 2000. Its includes a lush Indonesian-influenced landscape that features seven acres of water features, 4,000 trees, towering palms and 100,000 tropical plants. From its fairways, Bali Hai also features breathtaking views of The Strip.

Located 20 minutes from The Strip, in Summerlin, TPC Las Vegas features an 18-hole, par-71 course designed by acclaimed architect Bobby Weed and World Golf Hall of Fame member Raymond Floyd.

Bear's Best Las Vegas, opened in 2001, is a one-of-a-kind, par-72 course that features 18 of Jack Nicklaus' favorite holes from his 270 worldwide designs. "It's very popular with corporate meeting groups," says Meyer, "because it's a unique golf experience you can't find anywhere else in the world."

## More Than gaming

Given its broad popularity for major conventions and corporate meetings of all sizes, it's not at all surprising that Las Vegas has bounced back so quickly after the premature speculations about its demise. And its popularity grows daily.

"Until I really dug in deep as a planner, I was just one of those people who went to Las Vegas and had fun, just like everyone else," says Rosa. "But you have to think about Las Vegas as more than a gaming destination. As a serious event planner who has done meetings and events globally for many years, I can tell planners who have never used it that there is so much more to Las Vegas than you can possibly imagine until you do your research and discover it. And there are also great partnerships to be formed there," she adds.

In addition — and perhaps most important — Las Vegas continues to be a big draw for attendees. "Las Vegas definitely gets me and my people excited," says Linden. "When we send out the initial invite for our sales meeting in the summer or early fall, people get really excited when they know we're going to Las Vegas. Then when I throw out that our hotel is a great property like Paris, that elevates the excitement again. As a planner, you can't beat that."

**C&IT**

# DO I LOOK LIKE I PLAN BOONDOGGLES?



Sure, tourists may know Vegas for world-class dining, golf and entertainment. But in my world, the business world, Las Vegas has a reputation for state-of-the-art meeting facilities and world-class accommodations that draw more decision makers than any other city. And with more convention space, close airport proximity and better year-round weather than cities like New York, Chicago and San Francisco, Las Vegas isn't just a great place to do business, it's the smart place to do business. **Get the facts and get your team on board at [LVCVA.com](http://LVCVA.com).**

**LAS**  
*Vegas*



Jon Gordon

## Worn Out at Work?

### How to Purge Workplace Behaviors That Drain Everyone's Energy

Because you have been suffering through months of long, exhausting workdays due to the effects of the recent recession and downsizing, you're tired, depleted and quite frankly just done with "business as usual." You're laying the blame for your fatigue at the feet of the increased responsibilities and long hours, but you might be wrong. Working hard — when done with a good attitude in the right environment — can actually be quite invigorating. In other words, what's wearing you out at work might not be the work.

The real culprit is often the negativity of the people you work with and for, their constant complaining, and the pessimistic culture that is now the norm in a lot of workplaces.

The fact is, many of us work in a world of drainers. What exactly is a drainer? Anyone in the workplace — a boss, co-worker, employee or client — who sucks the life and energy right out of you.

No one sets out to be a drainer, of course. It's just that some people regularly exhibit energy-draining behaviors. What's worse, many bosses allow them to continue — or are themselves guilty of practicing these behaviors. And over time, the entire culture becomes poisoned.

If managers are able to identify the offending behaviors and fix them, they'll be able to spend more time nourishing their companies' cultures — which will, in turn, make employees happier and more productive, thus increasing the bottom line. Follow these tips to get the ball rolling in a positive direction:

- **DO** respond constructively when some-

one offers up an idea. Even if you know more about a particular project, have more experience than the rest of your team or are positive that the suggestions others are making are off the mark, hear them out. Let employees and co-workers know that when they come to you with their ideas, they'll be heard with an open mind and received with respect. Insist that everyone else practice positivity as well.

- **DON'T** give in to the temptation to whine. One person's complaint resonates with someone else, who then proceeds to add grievances to the pile, which prompts yet another individual to throw in her two (negative) cents and so on.
- **DO** push for solutions. The next time a water-cooler conversation threatens to barrel out of control into Complaint Central, step in and ask the complainers how they would make things better. Better yet, ban complaints altogether. It's tough love for sure — but it will also create and sustain a positive culture.
- **DON'T** leave critical or harsh messages on voice mail or send them to an e-mail inbox. Any communication you send via electronic methods can potentially last forever and come back to haunt you.
- **DO** suck it up and conduct the tough talks in person. If you need to have a stern talk with someone, or if you need to talk through a conflict or problem, do it in person if at all possible.
- **DON'T** confuse activity with progress. You know the person. She's always so busy but doesn't ever seem to meet deadlines or get anything done. She's

living proof of the fact that just because your day is full of things to do doesn't necessarily mean that you're getting them done.

- **DO** set goals and hold yourself and your employees accountable for results. These results should be ones that matter and that are visible and valuable to your team.
- **DON'T** let sub-par work slide. Simply put, low performers drag the rest of the team down.
- **DO** institute a zero-tolerance policy for low performers. Hold your entire team accountable for meeting their goals and adhering to the same performance standards.

right. Rather than clicking "send" just because it's 5:00 p.m., get focused and do your best work the first time.

- **DON'T** allow unmet deadlines to throw everything and everyone off track. With all the unexpected obstacles you face in a workday, it's not always easy to meet deadlines.
- **DO** set reasonable, clear deadlines for everyone involved (and hold them accountable). Once something gets off-track, nobody is willing to own it. Set reasonable deadlines that can be achieved.
- **DON'T** point fingers at others in order to take the heat off of yourself. A mistake is made, the boss is mad, a deadline is missed. If all eyes are on your team

### *The real culprit is often the negativity of the people you work with.*

- **DON'T** assume others have all the information they need, or that something you know isn't really all that important.
- **DO** make a concerted and proactive effort to make sure that the right people are in the know. You'll set your entire team up for success. Also, make sure you copy the right people on e-mails, promptly return voice mails and are clear about directions and expectations.
- **DON'T** allow disorganization to impede productivity. You're busy, and that's understandable. But constant disorganization can drain your employees and coworkers if they always have to cover your tracks.
- **DO** take the time you need to do the job

and you start pointing fingers, you could be making a huge mistake.

- **DO** accept responsibility for your actions gracefully and humbly. Nobody likes to be the one at fault. But owning up to your mistakes and learning from them are big parts of working together and being successful.

It's important for managers to acknowledge that it's been a tough year or two, and that you understand why folks are feeling drained and depleted. Above all, tell them that you are willing and eager to help alleviate some of that stress! A little acknowledgment can go a long way toward a brighter, more productive and much more energized year. **C&IT**

*Jon Gordon is a consultant, keynote speaker and author. His most recent book is Soup: A Recipe to Nourish Your Team and Culture (Wiley, 2010). Gordon has worked with such clients as the Atlanta Falcons, the PGA Tour, Northwestern Mutual, JPMorgan Chase and Publix Supermarkets. www.jongordon.com*



DEHART

Rio Mar Beach Resort & Spa, Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, has named **Brian DeHart** as national sales manager. He was senior sales manager at Embassy Suites Dulles North & Homewood Suites Dulles North, Dulles, VA. **Marisol Vélez** was promoted from sales manager to associate director of sales.



VELEZ

**Mark Benson** was name vice president of group sales for Kerzner International. Most recently, he led the international sales efforts for the Hotelera Posadas company, which includes the brands Live Aqua, Fiesta Americana and Caesar Park Hotels & Resorts.



BENSON

The Westin Peachtree Plaza, Atlanta, GA, has named **Katherine Wood** and **Mary York** as group sales managers. Wood was business travel sales manager with Hilton Worldwide representing five downtown Chicago hotels. York was sales coordinator at the W Atlanta Midtown.



WOOD

**William Buckley** was named director of sales and marketing for The Ritz-Carlton, Los Angeles and the JW Marriott Los Angeles at L.A. LIVE, Los Angeles, CA. He formerly served as executive vice president of convention sales and services at LA INC.



YORK

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.

Las Vegas Meetings by Caesars Entertainment has announced the following promotions and new hires:  
**Bally's Las Vegas and Paris Las Vegas:** **Debby Kase** was promoted from regional to national sales manager. **Kelly Stone** was promoted to regional sales manager. She was sales manager for Caesars Palace.  
**Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino:** **Destinee Walker** was promoted to sales manager. She was sales manager for Harrah's Las Vegas and Imperial Palace Las Vegas.  
**Donna Que** was named sales manager responsible for the Eastern region. She was sales assistant for Caesars Entertainment.

**Flamingo Las Vegas:** **Matthew Waltersdorf** was promoted to national sales manager. He formerly served as regional sales manager for Bally's Las Vegas and Paris Las Vegas. **Ashley Riemer** was named as sales manager for the Midwest region. She was sales manager at Alexis Park Resort in Las Vegas.

**Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino:** **Wendy Roller** was named as Midwest region sales manager. She was meeting manager for Association Headquarters Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

**Caesars Palace:** **William Biene** was promoted from express sales manager to sales manager.

The Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, Destin, FL, has named **Terri Marsh** as regional sales manager responsible for the Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee markets. She formerly served as director of sales and marketing at the Nashville Marriott at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. **Florencia Shiffer** was named regional sales manager responsible for the Northeast region of the U.S. She most recently served as senior sales manager at the Marriott mid-Atlantic regional sales office in Gaithersburg, MD.

C&IT

Ad Index	
ADVERTISER	PAGE NO.
ARIA Resort & Casino	41
Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority	47
Monte Carlo	COV IV
New York-New York Hotel and Casino	45
Ocean Reef Club	13, 15, 17
The Ritz-Carlton	5
Royal Caribbean International	27
San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau	11
Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Resort & Spa	37
Tourism Australia	9
Tulalip Resort Casino	16
Turkish Culture and Tourist Office in New York	COV II
The Venetian/The Palazzo	43
The Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa	39

Visit [www.themeetingmagazines.com](http://www.themeetingmagazines.com) for more information on our advertisers.

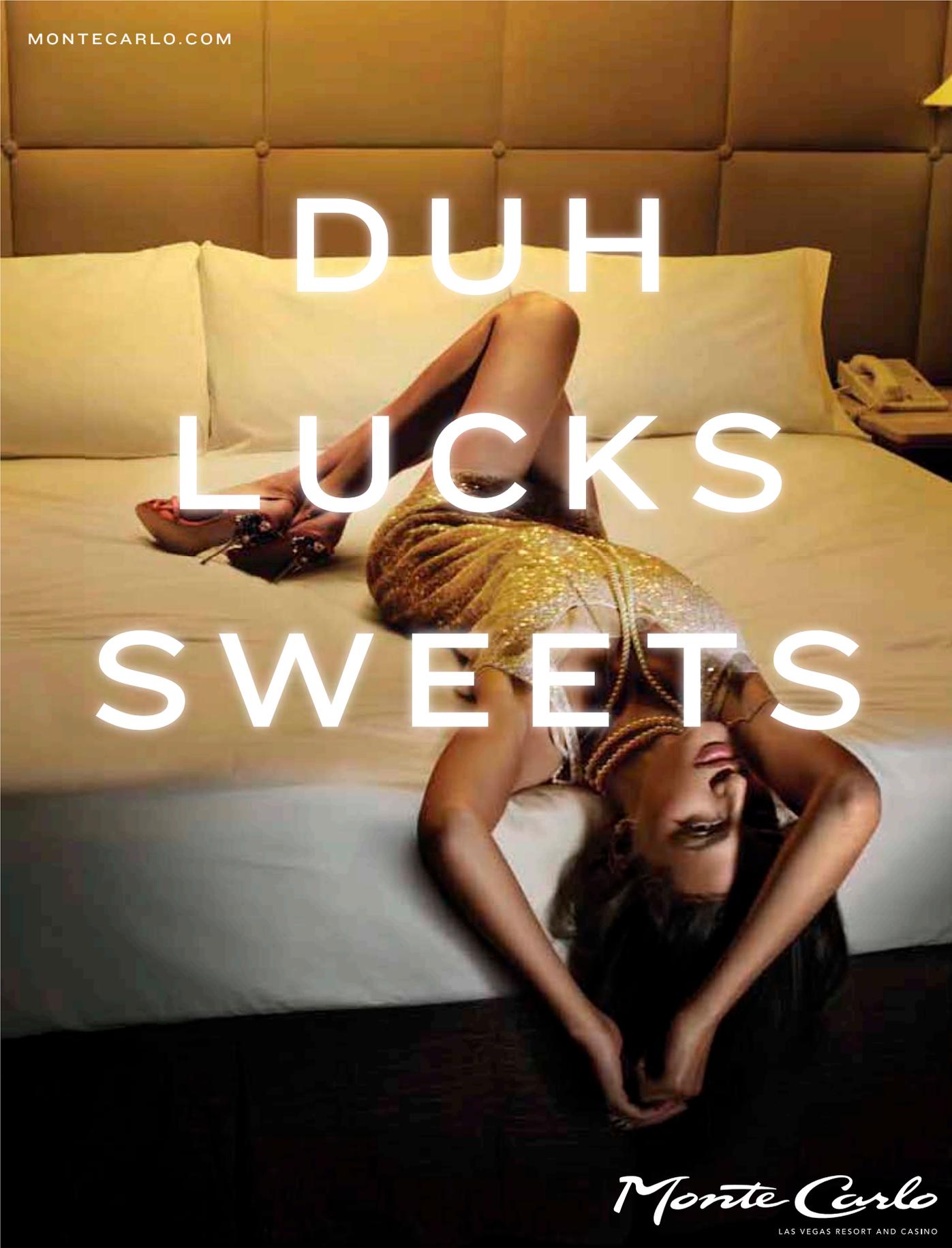
# READERS SERVICES

With the Internet Connection, you now have a convenient place to find important up-to-date contact information for leading hotels, resorts, conference centers, and convention and visitors bureaus that can make your job easier, whether it's site selection, travel planning or event organization.

ADVERTISER	PHONE NO.	WEB SITE	CONTACT	E-MAIL
ARIA Resort & Casino	866-718-2489	www.arialasvegas.com	Stephanie Windham	swindham@arialasvegas.com
Atlantis, Paradise Island	800-722-2449	www.atlantismeetings.com	Chris L. Wheeler	groupsales@atlantis.com
Baton Rouge Area Convention & Visitors Bureau	225-382-3587	www.visitbatonrouge.com	Geraldine Bordelon	geraldine@visitbatonrouge.com
Beau Rivage Resort & Casino	800-239-2771	www.beaurivage.com	Mike Davis	mdavis@beaurivage.com
Blue Man Group	800-blueman	www.blueman.com	Group Sales	sales@blueman.com
DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld	407-345-0056	www.doubletreeorlando seaworld.com	Group Sales	steven.green@pyramidhotelgroup.com
Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-933-8448	www.miamimeetings.com	Ita Moriarity	meetingsinfo@miamimeetings.com
Hammock Beach Resort	888-696-6730	www.hammockbeach.com	Jason Kern	groupsales@hammockbeach.com
Hilton Anaheim	714-740-4234	www.hiltonanaheimtour.com	Brad W. Logsdon	brad.logsdon@hilton.com
Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa	850-267-9600	www.hiltonsandestinbeach.com	Matthew Price	sales@hiltonsandestinbeach.com
Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa	505-771-6000	www.tamaya.hyatt.com	John Grenon	john.grenon@hyatt.com
Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort & Casino	800-545-6040	www.innofthemountaingods.com	Jo Kazhe	jokazhe@innofthemountaingods.com
Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority	877-847-4858	www.lvcva.com	Michael Goldsmith	mgoldsmith@lvcva.com
Loews Hotels at Universal Orlando	888-322-5531	www.uomeetingsandevents.com	Group Sales	meetings@universalorlando.com
Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-452-7829	www.visitlongbeach.com	Iris Himert	irish@longbeachcvb.org
Monte Carlo	702-730-7300	www.montecarlo.com	Group Sales	conventionsales@montecarlo.com
The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club	800-866-1946	www.naplesbeachhotel.com	Group Sales	groupsales@naplesbeachhotel.com
New York-New York Hotel and Casino	800-852-6061	www.nynyhotelcasino.com	Group Sales	nynymeetings@nyforme.com
Norwegian Cruise Line	866-NCL-MEET	www.events.ncl.com	Brandon Townsley	btownsley@ncl.com
Ocean Reef Club	800-843-2730	www.oceanreef.com	Richard Weinstein	ORCSales@oceanreef.com
Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate	407-238-6526	www.omnihotels.com/findahotel/orlando championsgate/meetingfacilities.aspx	Group Sales	mcocha.leads@omnihotels.com
Ponte Vedra Inn & Club	800-234-7842	www.pontevedra.com	Tony Fitzjohn	sales@pvresorts.com
Radisson Our Lucaya	954-340-2259	www.ourlucaya.com	Elizabeth Baum	elizabeth.baum@ourlucaya.com
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	800-477-7500	www.rssc.com	Mario Villalobos	mvillalobos@rssc.com
Reunion Resort	888-418-9614	www.reunionresort.com	Jean Spaulding	jspaulding@reunionresort.com
Rosen Centre Hotel	407-996-9939	www.rosencentre.com	Todd Frappier	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Rosen Plaza Hotel	407-996-9939	www.rosenplaza.com	Victoria Hall	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Rosen Shingle Creek	407-996-9939	www.rosenshinglecreek.com	Leslie Menichini	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Royal Caribbean International	800-762-0458	www.royalcaribbeanincentives.com	Lori Cassidy	royalmeetingsandincentives@rccl.com
San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau	877-973-6338	www.sandiego.org/positiveresults	Group Sales	Meetings@sdcvb.org
Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Resort & Spa	480-607-2350	www.sanctuaryaz.com	Group Sales	info@sanctuary.com
South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa	702-797-8050	www.southpointmeetings.com	Maureen Robinson	sales@southpointcasino.com
Talking Stick Resort	480-850-7777	www.talkingstickresort.com	Group Sales	sales@talkingstickresort.com
Tourism Australia	310-695-3207	www.events.australia.com	Samantha Holmes	sholmes@tourism.australia.com
Tulalip Resort Casino	360-716-6500	www.tulalipresort.com	Troy Longwith	sales@tulalipresort.com
Turkish Culture and Tourist Office in New York	877-For-Turkey	www.goturkey.com	Group Sales	ny@tourismturkey.org
Tuscany Suites & Casino	877-887-2263	www.tuscanylv.com	Group Sales	sales@tuscanylv.com
Universal Orlando Resort	888-322-5531	www.uomeetingsandevents.com	Group Sales	meetings@universalorlando.com
The Venetian/The Palazzo	702-414-4202	www.venetianpalazzomeetings.com	Chandra Allison	chandra.allison@venetianpalazzo.com
Visit Orlando	800-662-2825	www.orlandomeeting.com	Karen Harrington	convention.sales@orlandocvb.com
Walt Disney World Resort	321-939-7112	www.disneymeetings.com	Anne Hamilton	meetings@disneyworld.com
Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort	800-524-4939	www.swandolphinmeetings.com	Eric Opron	meetings@swandolphin.com
The Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa	702-836-5934	www.westin.com/lasvegas	Sandra Horvath	shorvath@westinlv.com
The Westin La Cantera Resort	210-558-2229	www.westinlacantera.com	Patty Pedraza	patty.pedraza@westin.com

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

MONTECARLO.COM

A woman in a gold sequined dress is lying on a bed with her head on the floor, looking up at the camera. The bed has white pillows and a tufted headboard. The text 'DUH LUCKS SWEETS' is overlaid in large white letters.

DUH  
LUCKS  
SWEETS

*Monte Carlo*

LAS VEGAS RESORT AND CASINO

GREAT RATES STARTING AT \$56.

UNPRETENTIOUSLY LUXURIOUS™