

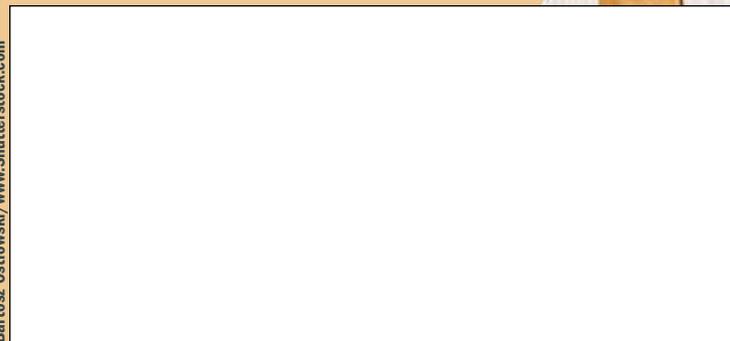
Corporate & Incentive Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

Rewards on the Rebound

'Creative Solutions
in a Difficult
Environment'

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Destinations: Arizona ●

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VOLUME 30 NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2012

ISSN 0739-1587

USPS 716-450

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Incentive Travel**
THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION



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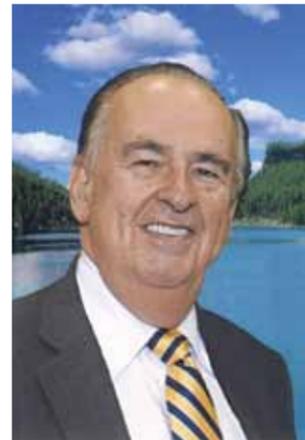
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Corporate & Incentive Travel (USPS 716-450) is published monthly by Coastal Communications Corporation, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394; 561-989-0600. Single copies \$9.00 U.S.A. only. Yearly subscription price is \$90.00 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. © 2012

Meetings and Events Contribute to Economic and Business Growth

Uplifting news about meetings, tourism and travel are making headlines all over the map nowadays. As well they should. All the hard work by industry associations is beginning to pay off. "Meetings mean big business, and we applaud our members for stressing the importance of our industry to key legislators as they develop domestic and international policies," says Convention Industry Council (CIC) CEO Karen Kotowski, CAE, CMP. The CIC recently recognized the efforts of the U.S. Travel Association and the American Hotel and Lodging Association for bringing international travel and tourism to the national stage. CIC President Steven Hacker congratulated the associations: "As a result of their leadership and the efforts of all CIC members, the meetings industry contributes more to the GDP than the auto manufacturing, air transportation and the motion picture industry, according to the Economic Significance Study released by CIC in 2011," says Hacker. The study also revealed the total economic output of the meetings and events industry (\$904 billion in total U.S. economic impact), impact on employment and labor (6.3 million U.S. jobs) as well as federal and state tax revenue generated (\$110 billion combined).



On the global stage, an independent study commissioned by Marriott International and published at the World Economic Forum in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, revealed that "international travel is considered even more important than the Internet, TV/movies, or political diplomacy at stimulating the economy and breaking down cultural barriers."

International arrivals are expected to reach 1 billion in 2012, according to the UN World Tourism Organization. Now that the administration is finally opening up the doors to international visitors by reforming the visa process, the future looks much brighter for travel and tourism. In fact, U.S. Travel says one American job is created for every 35 international visitors to the U.S. And, according to Meeting Professionals International's December 2011 Business Barometer, a bi-monthly quantitative perspective of the global business of meetings and events, meeting professionals around the world report a sharp jump up in employment numbers within the meetings industry. Only time will tell if all these predictions are accurate, but the promising headlines of a rosy future are certainly welcome.

Harvey Grotsky
Publisher



A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

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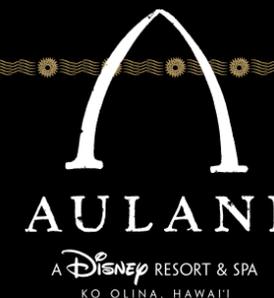


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EMI Appoints Washko as V.P. of Sales and Marketing

SANTA BARBARA, CA — Elite Meetings International Inc. (EMI), announced that it appointed John Washko to the new position of vice president, sales and marketing. Washko,



WASHKO

who served for four years as a member of the Elite Meetings Advisory Board, will drive revenue generation by creating sales strategies and initiatives for Elite's three products — SpeedRFP, EliteMeetings.com and FaceTime Appointment Scheduler. He will also supervise the sales and planner communications teams for Elite, which operates out of California, New York, Florida, Mexico and Spain. Prior to joining Elite, Washko was vice president of sales and marketing at The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO. His previous experience included executive sales management positions at Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas, and at PGA National Resort & Spa, Palm Beach Gardens, FL. www.elitemeetings.com

2012 Site International Foundation Leadership Announced

CHICAGO, IL — The Site International Foundation named its International Board of Trustees, effective January 1, 2012. The president for 2012 is Stephen Powell, senior vice president of worldwide sales, InterContinental Hotels Group. According to a statement, Powell's agenda for 2012 includes releasing the next data set for the Participant Viewpoint study, producing four Site Index studies and beginning collaborative research with like-minded associations, such as supporting the U.K. economic impact study. Executive committee officers include immediate past president Steve O'Malley, senior vice president, Maxvantage/Maritz Inc.; president-elect Jane E. Schuldt, CITE, president, World Marketing Group Ltd.; vice president Madelyn Marusa, DMCP, vice president, industry relations, PRA Destination Management; vice president finance Penny E. Wing, president, Incentive Travel Inc./World 5 Inc., The Temperance Works. www.siteglobal.com

Universal Orlando Resort to Offer New Entertainment Experiences

ORLANDO, FL — Starting in February at Universal Orlando Resort, guests will experience a new Blue Man Group show including a pulsating new finale with an original Blue Man Group music score. New elements coming to The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man this spring include 4K digital high-definition animation, new high-tech 3-D glasses and upgrades to the set, audio and lighting systems. Universal's Superstar Parade — an all-new daily parade that features larger-than-life floats, state-of-the-art technology and street performers — arrives in the spring. With narration by award-winning actor Morgan Freeman, guests will relive memorable moments from Universal Pictures' most powerful and beloved films during the nighttime show "Universal's Cinematic Spectacular — 100 Years of Movie Memories." This summer, families will be transformed into minions for an adventure inside the new Despicable Me Minion Mayhem attraction. Other openings include Hollywood Drive-In Golf, a unique 36-hole miniature golf experience; a new immersive retail entertainment experience; and minutes away from Universal Orlando, the popular Wet 'n Wild water park will open its first interactive family water play area this summer. www.universalorlando.com

Universal Orlando Announces New Partner Golf Courses for Meetings

ORLANDO, FL — Meeting and group clients at the three onsite hotels at Universal Orlando Resort — Loews Portofino Bay Hotel, Hard Rock Hotel and Loews Royal Pacific Resort — now have golf privileges at Orlando's Grand



LARUFFA

Cypress Golf Club and Windermere Country Club. Golf Universal Orlando offers meeting planners the services of a dedicated golf coordinator to plan and oversee their entire golf event. Vince LaRuffa, vice president of resort sales and marketing for Universal Orlando Resort, says, "Planners can leave the work to us and let our team, along with our new partners, create a worry-free golf outing or tournament." Grand Cypress Golf Club features 45 holes of award-winning Jack Nicklaus Signature-designed golf. Windermere Country Club was recently renovated and offers a unique opportunity to be a "Member for a Day" at a world-class golf course. www.universalorlando.com/hotels/golf

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MEETING VALUES



Omni Bedford Springs Resort, Bedford Springs, PA.

The 2012 Winter Relief Meeting Package, available through March 2012 with rates starting at \$159, includes complimentary meeting space, ergonomic chairs and AV; 45-minute cooking demonstration with executive chef; Wi-Fi throughout the resort; valet parking; historical tour of the resort; daily afternoon tea; continuous break service; use of onsite fitness center and indoor pool; and nightly firepit conversation. 866-623-8168, www.omnibedfordspringsresort.com

■ **Lansdowne Resort, Leesburg, VA.** The Twice the Meeting plan includes 50 percent allowable attrition; 50 percent off an opening reception; 50 percent off airport transfers; 50 percent off contracted golf event; and 50 percent off Spa Minerale. The offer is valid for new meetings booked by March 31, 2012 and consumed by December 30, 2012. 877-509-8400, www.lansdowneresort.com

■ **Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, GA.** Complete Meeting Package rates start at \$150/person single occupancy (minimum of 20 rooms required) and include: breakfast, lunch and dinner; a.m. and p.m. breaks; general session meeting room; flip-chart package; three "Taste of Callaway" gift bags; use of the Callaway fitness center; admission to the resort's gardens, nature trails and bicycle trail; and accommodations in the Mountain Creek Inn. 800-543-7121, www.callawaygardens.com

Sustainability Reporting Guidance Launched

BEAVERTON, OR— Event organizers can now report on sustainability issues such as impacts on communities, natural environments, and local and global economies, thanks to new guidance published by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC) helped to develop the guidance as part of a multi-stakeholder working group and advisory group. The new Event Organizers Sector Supplement (EOSS) covers the complete project life cycle of an event, from bid to planning, execution and, finally, post-event, including the issue of event legacy. GMIC's President Paul Salinger, who is V.P. of marketing at Oracle, says, "The release of the event organizers sector supplement through the GRI, which is the global standard for corporate sustainability reporting, gives an enormous boost to the credibility, materiality and relevance of sustainability reporting for meetings and events." www.gmicglobal.org

EVENTS CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 27, 2012
HOSPITALITY SALES AND MARKETING ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL (HSMAI) ADRIAN AWARDS
New York Marriott Marquis
New York, NY
Contact: 703-506-3274
www.adrianawards.com

FEBRUARY 27, 2012
DESTINATION MARKETING ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL (DMAI) FOUNDATION DINNER
Walter E. Washington Convention Center
Washington, DC
Contact: 202-296-7888
www.destinationmarketing.org

FEBRUARY 28, 2012
DESTINATION MARKETING ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS SHOWCASE WASHINGTON
Walter E. Washington Convention Center
Washington, DC
Contact: 202-296-7888
www.destinationsshowcase.com

MARCH 21-23, 2012
IACC-AMERICAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE
La Torretta Lake Resort & Spa
Montgomery (Houston), TX
Contact: 314-993-8575
www.iacconline.org

APRIL 4-5, 2012
HSMAI'S MEET MID-AMERICA 2012
Navy Pier
Chicago, IL
914-421-3270
www.hsmaimeet.com

MAY 30-31, 2012
HSMAI'S MEET WEST 2012
Anaheim Marriott
Anaheim, CA
914-421-3270
www.hsmaimeet.com

JUNE 19-21, 2012
THE AMERICAS MEETINGS & EVENTS EXHIBITION (AIBTM)
Baltimore Convention Center
Baltimore, MD
203-840-5975
www.aibtm.com

By Miranda van Brück

Proving the Business Value of Meetings

Editor's Note: The following is the first in a series on Meeting Professionals International's Business Value of Meetings Toolbox.

Since the onslaught of the AIG effect in 2008, the need to prove the value and necessity of business meetings and events has been paramount for individuals, governments, organizations and corporations — and Meeting Professionals International has continually championed the cause of proving return on investment and return on objectives. Early on, with other affiliated associations, we took a defensive stance to protect our constituents against harsh criticism and empower event professionals to defend their programs and sometimes their careers.

In-depth research among our membership showed that proving the Business Value of Meetings is a topic many of our members struggle with. Through the MPI Foundation, funds were raised to activate The Business Value of Meetings Thought Leadership, which is providing research insights and hands-on business tools that will enable planners to immediately introduce BVOM measures to their meetings and communicate the value of these meetings in such a way that it is never questioned again.

A main focus of the initial research was to look for best practices in proving the business value of meetings. Our plan was to come to the marketplace with a profile of best practices to discuss and learn from, but sometimes the best-laid plans don't always come to fruition.

Our research discovered fragmented practices, a fear of a perceived complexity and event professionals often overwhelmed by even the idea of speaking the language of business, and being held accountable for goals they'd often never been

consulted on. So MPI took our findings from this Business Value of Meetings (BVOM) research initiative and decided that if best practices and robust models for measurement weren't being practiced widely, then it was time we began building tools to address the different levels of concern and helping our community to take the first steps towards introducing measurement practices.

The Toolbox

We've realized that while our research, interviews, education sessions and surveys give us a large amount of data, what they don't give us are the tools we need to actually help our members build successful measurement practices, which will determine the Business Value of their meetings BVOM programs. Hence the launch of phase two of our BVOM initiative — the toolbox. We're introducing this new set of resources as a toolbox because a toolbox can be continually added to and selected from. For example, while a professional may have strong analytical skills, they may need a tool to help them establish clear event objectives that are aligned to business objectives. So as the tools get added, individuals can sort through, pick and choose what they need — then use them!

The first tools we've introduced are truly foundation pieces. First, there is a PowerPoint presentation that is an overview of the five key elements the research identified a professional must successfully master in order to create a successful BVOM measurement program. From there, we've created five white papers (and don't let that term bore you) that explore the research findings briefing, then delve into useful applications of the information in the day-to-day work environment.

For example, the first white paper is on how to

identify the perceptions and the realities within an organization regarding whether it is worth time and resources to measure the business value of meetings. The power-packed, two-page document briefly outlines the challenge, the primary findings on this topic from our preliminary research and then delves into addressing both the perception and reality of those findings. The benefits are then outlined and another section breaks down in one paragraph "what it all means." This makes the white paper itself a resource that contains information that's easy to absorb, practical ways to apply to a variety of work scenarios, etc.

One of the exciting things for me as the knowledge manager overseeing this project is seeing actual tools being developed from the research. We've spent almost three years talking in theory about proving ROI of meetings and how we should do it. Now we're actually able to show people how to do it and provide them with actual tools so they can take the first steps at implementing these practices into their organizations.

We are making sure the tools we put in the toolbox are sound, strong and useful. So moving into the months ahead, our research team as well as the team at MPI are working on resources that empower

people to approach their business in a smarter way, enabling them to be more successful. For example, the first white paper includes instructional videos, a glossary of terms, two additional case studies and a handout on the benefits of change as well as a presentation featuring "A Tale of Two Meetings."

Each of the five white papers takes a similar approach, highlighting potential solutions to challenges in developing skills such as getting stakeholder buy-in. In some cases there are actual examples of things that are working for professionals active in the industry right now.

Tools under development include:

- Glossary of terms.
- Instructional videos and podcasts.
- Articles detailing solutions and examples of success.
- Case studies and corresponding webinars to delve into best practice ideas.
- How-to guides, tutorials and workbooks that professionals can use on a specific job.

Each tool is intended to provide more actionable information that equips individuals to succeed. MPI members will have unlimited access to the new tools and non-member professionals will be able to purchase them. **C&IT**

“We've spent three years talking in theory about proving ROI. ...Now we're able to show people **how to do it.**”



Miranda van Brück

is Knowledge Manager, Meeting Professionals International, Dallas, TX. Miranda, who focuses on knowledge management for MPI globally, is responsible for the overall development, design and aggregation of MPI content for use in various delivery channels, to include live events, online learning and others. www.mpiweb.org

Rewards on the Rebound

‘Creative Solutions in a Difficult Environment’

By Mike Bassett

While the dark days of 2008–09 have been left behind, uncertainty about the economy — underlined by continuing high unemployment and acrimonious arguments about the national debt — has the meetings and convention industry just a little bit gun shy when it comes to evaluating the prospects for incentive programs entering 2012.



“There’s never been any question of eliminating it (annual incentive), even when we have years that haven’t been as profitable. Our leadership team values it very highly.”

KATHY BRASSIL, CMP, Manager, Meeting Services, Monsanto, St. Louis, MO



For example, the Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) pulse survey released in November found an unsettling number of survey respondents — 62 percent — reporting the economy was having a “negative impact” on their incentive planning. Sandi Daniel, president and CEO of the Fire Light Group, an incentive marketing company, and an IRF trustee, says that kind of pessimistic response approaches 2008 levels.

But, Daniel says the apparent pessimism of the survey respondents should be put in perspective. After all, the pulse survey released in the spring of 2011 showed a positive trend concerning incentive programming. “There’s so much uncertainty,” Daniel says. “There seems to be something new happening every day, so these negative responses could just reflect the mood of the week.”

Positive Trends

Daniel points out that the IRF survey contains some positive news as well. For example, only 28 percent of respondents expect to see a decrease in incentive program travel budgets for the coming year. Twenty-seven percent actually expect to see budgets increase.

So, it’s clear, says Daniel, that there are many companies that continue to understand and appreciate the value of incentives.

For example, Kathy Brassil, CMP, manager, meeting services, for the St. Louis, MO-based multinational agricultural company Monsanto, calls their annual incentive in Hawaii a “critical component” of her company’s sales strategy.

The program budget hasn’t changed, and neither has the format — it continues to be a week-long program. “There’s never been any question of eliminating it, even when we have years that haven’t been as profitable,” she says. “Our leadership team values it very highly.”

Julie Benson, planning/buying director at Minneapolis loyalty management company Aimia, formerly Carlson Marketing, says that while her company has seen neither large increases nor decreases in incentive travel, those incentive trips that are taking place have seen the numbers of participants increase. “Which tells us that it’s obviously very important that these companies continue to reward people by offering incentives,” she says.

There is also some evidence that the perception issue is beginning to finally subside. Brad Williams, vice president, meetings and events, for MotivAction, an incentive management company with offices in Minneapolis and Chicago, says companies that in 2009 and 2010 held off holding incentives at properties that “conjured up an image of luxury,” are changing their tunes. “There is much less

“We’re trying hard to come up with some creative solutions in a difficult environment.”



JULIE BENSON, Planning/Buying Director Aimia, Minneapolis, MN

concern about that now and we are seeing more bookings with the traditional luxury chains like Ritz-Carlton and Four Seasons," Williams says.

The meeting component of the incentive trip continues to become an ever more crucial part of the overall program. Attendees "really appreciate the face-to-face time they get with senior management on these trips," says Daniel. "They like to get together and network, particularly those people in companies that are widespread."

Employee interaction with senior leadership is "one of the really big parts of our program," says Brassil. "We had 10 people from our leadership team (at the last trip) and 120 of the winning employees, so the ratio of leaders to winners was small." This allows for a lot of valuable one-on-one interaction between the company's leaders and high-performance employees, Brassil says.

A Challenging Environment

Budget restrictions are having an

impact on incentive programming, which is making the incentive environment "challenging," Benson says. "We're trying hard to come up with some creative solutions in a difficult environment."

One result of reduced or stagnant incentive budgets is shorter trips, adds Benson, an observation supported by the IRF pulse survey.

According to the survey, 41 percent of respondents anticipate reducing the total number of days and nights for the accommodations portion of incentive travel programs over the next year. Reductions will be seen in other portions of incentive programs as well:

- Thirty-five percent report that onsite inclusions per program participant will decrease.
- Thirty-two percent indicate that the number of rooms

for incentive travel programs will be reduced.

- Twenty-two percent say the number of room upgrades will be reduced.
- Forty percent say that sponsored non-meal related components will be reduced.

Financial uncertainty is also having an impact on non-travel incentives as well. Twenty-four percent of IRF survey respondents said the economic downturn will have a negative impact on their ability to plan and implement merchandise non-cash incentive programs in the coming year — an increase of 10 percent compared to survey results from spring 2011. At the same time, just 25 percent expect to see a positive impact, down 7 percent from spring 2011 survey results.

The irony, Daniel says, is that while she believes companies actually have the money to apply to their incentive budgets — both travel and non-travel — the uncertainty has them spooked. "They're just afraid to spend right now," she says.

Incentives and Employee Morale

Daniel points out that surveys of employee attitudes indicate how important the issue of employee engagement has become when it comes to issues concerning employee morale, performance and retention.

The new "What's Working Survey," conducted by Mercer Human Resource Consulting (taken between the fourth quarter of 2010 and the second quarter of 2011) of 30,000 employees in 17 geographical markets found a marked decline in the rate of employee loyalty. For example, the survey found that in the U.S. the number of employees considering a job change rose to 32 percent, up nine percent since a similar survey was performed in 2005.

Another survey has some equally disquieting news for employers. This survey of 562 senior managers and executives, performed by AMA Enterprise (a division of the American Management Association), determined that 26 percent of employers are ineffective at re-



Photo courtesy of Grand Wailea Resort

The cabanas at Maui's Grand Wailea Resort provide a serene retreat for top-performing employees experiencing an incentive program in the Hawaiian Islands.

taining their high-performing employees. The same survey found that just 18 percent of employers are very effective at retaining those same employees.

"So, at the time we have all of this negative news about the economy, we have a problem with employees feeling negatively about their jobs," Daniel says. "Companies aren't hiring, employees are having to do more with less, and it's having a negative impact on morale. At a time some companies are afraid to spend money on incentives, it's actually the very time they should be spending money on them."

It's reassuring, therefore, says Daniel, that her company is seeing more interest developing in the consulting side of the incentive business.

Companies are being careful about the way they spend their money, Daniel says, "and they are going to take a number of steps before they actually start spending." One of those steps, she says, is determining how they can structure a better incentive program.

"Companies are actively seeking the best tools to motivate and engage their employees," she says. "They recognize that investing in your people is never a bad idea, so they are starting to reach out to us."

Staying Close to Home

When companies do travel, they seem to be staying fairly close to home, although some of the old tried-and-true,

long-haul destinations such as Europe remain attractive, while some new favorites are developing as well.

According to the IRF pulse survey, 83 percent of respondents said that they have selected sites in North America as destinations for their incentive travel programs in the coming year. Fifty-five percent said they have chosen Caribbean destinations, while

Brassil says Monsanto continues to book its incentive in Hawaii because the salesforce is global. Half the incentive's attendees come from North America, and the rest are based internationally, "so Hawaii is a perfect destination for us," she says.

Aimia has many international clients, Julie Benson says, so a lot of them are booking international destinations, but in the geographical areas in which the incentive program took place. As for companies within North America, the usual suspects such as Hawaii, Florida, Arizona, the Bahamas and the Caribbean remain popular, she says.

Benson says North American clients are starting to look at Europe again, particularly emerging markets such as Croatia, Prague in the Czech Republic, and the Turkish coast along the Mediterranean Sea.

These are areas that are more exotic and less expensive than the traditional destinations such as Paris and Rome. "Some companies are looking for an experience that's different from what they've offered in the past," Benson says.

What to Look for in 2012

According to Brad Williams of MotivAction, these are trends we can expect to see this year:

- More multiyear deals. Hotel chains are increasingly eager to obtain long-term business on the books and are willing to offer attractive offers and packages.
- Going green is becoming more formal. Guidelines have been introduced so that a meeting or event may be officially certified as green.
- Locavore dining is becoming all the rage. It's about eating what's local, organic and seasonal.
- Lifestyle cuisine. Healthful food options catering to all types of diets including vegetarian, low fat, low carb and gluten free, are becoming increasingly available.
- Social media is emerging as an effective way to communicate with program participants.
- Mobile meeting apps. The use of smartphones is soaring, and it's now possible to have all of the information about your meeting or event and hotel and destination in the palm of your hand. — MB



"(Attendees) really appreciate the face-to-face time they get with senior management on these trips. They like to get together and network, particularly those people in companies that are widespread."

SANDI DANIEL, President and CEO
Fire Light Group, NY and WI



Europe is the site of an incentive for 52 percent of respondents.

Other areas include Central America, 29 percent; Asia, 18 percent; South America, 18 percent; Africa, 18 percent; and the Middle East, five percent. Overall, 16 percent of respondents said that in the coming year they expect to see a change from international to domestic destinations in their incentive programs.

"They don't want the same old incentive program, but something new to reward the group they're trying to inspire."

Brad Williams agrees that many companies are staying close to home, but suggests that has more to do with budget cuts that are shortening the length of incentive travel programs. "You can't go too far for a three-night trip," he says. Williams adds that for those companies

looking to travel outside North America, “the destination that is generating the most buzz right now is Panama. It’s the new Costa Rica with new resorts (such as the Trump Ocean Club International Hotel and The Westin Playa Bonita), a jungle, great beaches and airlift.”

Cruising Is Back

Daniel says her company is also seeing a lot of interest and activity in cruising. “It’s a program with costs you can really contain,” she says. “It’s a floating hotel out there with prices in American dollars.”

Travel, including cruising, is viewed as an excellent non-cash prize to motivate employees. According to a study published in *The Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management* that compared cash and non-cash rewards among 45 insurance agents, travel was the biggest motivator resulting in more sales.

In his blog, Brad Nickel, vice president, marketing and product development, of Landry & Kling, the cruise event services company in Coral Gables, FL, says, “With travel incentives, employees have the opportunity to visit destinations or



Photo courtesy of Carnival Cruise Lines

“The (CSR) event was a huge hit. Not only did the attendees get a chance to rub elbows with the chef, but they made care packages for the shelter as well. So it was a combined event, which I think could become a trend.”

**LUCY EISELE, CITE, Principal
Integrity Incentives, Big Lake, MN**



go on trips they may not have necessarily choose on their own due to budgetary concerns. Travel or incentive trips also hold the potential of creating lasting and meaningful memories.

“Cruises are one example of an ideal incentive trip. There are a variety of ships and trips suitable for organizations and companies of all sizes. Interest in cruising is also high in the United States. According to the Cruise Line Industry Association, 36 million Americans indicated that they have an intention to cruise in the next three years,” Nickel reported last fall.

Doing Good as a Reward

The inclusion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) components in incentive programs continues to become more established. According to the IRF survey, 44 percent of respondents said they are using CSR “tools and techniques” to enhance their programs.

“More and more people are getting into the act,” says Lucy Eisele, CITE, principal of Big Lake, MN-based Integrity Incentives. “Planners, hotels, DMCs, convention services companies — they’re all starting to do them.”

The Carnival Spirit in Alaska, one of North America’s most popular cruise incentives.

Eisele says that while she still has clients that do straight incentives without CSR components, “there’s a definite trend towards a general acceptance that attendees are going to expect it” as part of an incentive program.

Even though the presence of CSR components in incentive travel is a relatively recent phenomenon, its role is evolving, Eisele says.

For example, the budget cuts in incentive travel programs mean shorter program durations, which means “time is of the essence,” Eisele says. “So, now companies are trying to see what they can accomplish in two or three hours, where a few years ago they could give a half day, or even a full day with a lunch break.

“I think that could become the norm,” Eisele says. “Which means the end result could become a little diluted, which is a concern.”

Eisele says time constraints could help establish another trend: combined events involving a CSR component. Eisele introduced the idea at an event held early in 2011 in Savannah in which attendees spent a day at a cooking school and prepared meals, which, in turn, were delivered to a local charity — in this case, a battered women’s shelter.

“The event was a huge hit,” Eisele says. “Not only did the attendees get a chance to rub elbows with the chef, but they made care packages for the shelter as well. So it was a combined event, which I think could become a trend, and it’s something I’m proposing more and more.”

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A Different Animal



The Lion's Share of Meetings Have Fewer than 25 Attendees

By Karen Brost

If you've ever wondered just how much small meetings matter, check out this statistic from the Carlson Wagonlit Travel Management Institute: In a survey of 2,360 meeting and event attendees from more than six countries, the organization found that nearly two-thirds of all meetings and events have fewer than 25 attendees, and nearly 80

percent have 50 or fewer attendees. So it's no surprise that the market for small meetings is a big deal.

Meetings industry veteran Ian Quartermaine discovered the enormous demand for small meetings during the 10 years he spent as HelmsBriscoe's licensee handling the international market. "We were getting

a lot of requests for small meetings," he explains. "If you're doing a meeting for 30 people, there's almost as much work in doing that as there is for 300 people, but the return is 10 percent less. It's almost not worthwhile (for a third party) to do it, although they had to because they recognized it was an avenue to larger meetings.

"Small meetings are typically board meetings, training meetings and sales meetings," he continues. "They have less changing elements than a very large meeting has." Quartermaine, who has an Internet background, decided to see if there was an opportunity for an on-line solution that would "take the grunt work out of" planning small meetings.

"In 2009, we launched a test site, which was MeetingsInLondon," he says. "It was a very, very basic site and the call to action was a form to fill in. We called it 'the meeting concierge,' which was then sent to two HelmsBriscoe associates to fulfill. We spent between \$20-\$30,000 on the test, but we got back \$5.7 million worth of leads and closed \$1.25 million worth of business. I thought, OK, we've got some legs here."

After an amicable split from HelmsBriscoe, Quartermaine launched MeetingsIn.com, a global online RFP and booking resource that targets the small meetings market. The site includes city guides and planning tools such as a guide to contracts and a glossary of industry terminology. The site utilizes StarCite's database of 93,000 hotels, and RFPs submitted through the site are powered by StarCite's small meetings platform. MeetingsIn has developed microsites for 23 destinations in North America, Europe, Asia/Pacific

and Africa, and more cities are continually being added. Quartermaine also plans to enhance the site with rich media, including a video on how to conduct a site inspection for a small meeting.

Quartermaine says that MeetingsIn has proven to be popular with novice planners as well as professionals. He spoke to one executive from a large company who has a team of seven event planners who are very busy planning large events. She says that if one of her district managers wants to bring 10 people in for a meeting in Phnom Penh, for example, she can direct them to MeetingsIn to make the arrangements, yet she can still keep track of their plans.

MeetingsIn is available to planners free of charge, and because there are no transaction fees involved, planners can still take advantage of any arrangements they have with their preferred hotels. All they need to do is note that information on their RFPs. Quartermaine explains, "As the buyers and the hotels contract their own commercial terms between themselves, we do not receive any fees or commission for this. We monetize the platform by listing fees from the hotels and suppliers." He continues, "MeetingsIn is a one-stop source for destination information, planning tools and a free, easy-to-use platform for sourcing their RFPs."

Ian Quartermaine
Founder and CEO
MeetingsIn
Scottsdale, AZ



"If you're doing a meeting for 30 people, there's almost as much work in doing that as there is for 300 people."



Bob Frisch
Managing Partner
Strategic Offsites Group
Boston, MA

"One of the reasons people like having an outside facilitator is that it's always good to have a neutral party at the flipchart who is helping to manage the conversation."

holding strategy meetings offsite. "In this era, first after 9/11 and then after the market crash a couple of years ago, a lot of companies' offsites started to be held in-house. We always try to discourage our clients from doing so. Even if you're only going to a hotel around the corner, there's a tremendous virtue in getting out of the building. Part of that is getting people away from dropping back to their offices during the break and never coming back. Also, as we think about strategy, we're really trying to get people's mindsets away from the day-to-day of running the business, and a change in venue really helps get a certain distance and perspective that you really can't get in your own conference room.

"We are finding more and more clients are starting to go back to the classic off-site destination," he continues. "It used to be partially as a reward for work that's well done, but I actually think the meetings are more productive. People have an opportunity to relax. They're not necessarily trying to end (the meeting) to rush home. They're going to be staying over at the facility. The conversation tends to continue over recreational activities, cocktails, meals, etc. You really do get people sort of engaged in a multiday conversation that is very, very hard to do when you're not all traveling together.

Anatomy of a Successful Small Meeting

Small meetings can have a significant impact on a company's future, particularly when the purpose of the meeting is to chart a new course or address major issues the company is facing. Bob Frisch is managing partner of Strategic Offsites Group Inc., a Boston-based company dedicated to designing, managing and facilitating these types of offsite strategy meetings for Fortune 500 to medium-sized companies.

Frisch described the advantages of

“Our business is really the design and facilitation of strategy conversations,” he explains. “One of the reasons people like having an outside facilitator is that it’s always good to have a neutral party at the flipchart who is helping to manage the conversation. It’s all about the management team getting together to talk about things that they don’t normally talk about day-to-day. You want enough process so that conversation has a beginning, a middle and an end. Most conversations in corporate life have a middle. You sort of jump in, you go around two or three rotations, you jump out and you never really come to any conclusions. We like to have that conversation have a specific targeted outcome.”

Strategic Offsites Group has helped its clients achieve specific outcomes such as developing a three- to five-year vision for the business, clarifying their value proposition, dealing with large external change and the allocation of resources. The company has also helped executive teams develop a plan for managing the strategic initiatives they’ve put into place.

Frisch cautions against turning these



River Terrace Inn in Napa, CA, boasts an intimate, luxury ambience for small meetings.

meetings into what he describes as “Christmas tree meetings.” “Everybody wants to hang their ‘hour two’ topic onto the meeting,” he explains. “They say, ‘Gee, the senior team is getting together. It would be great to spend two hours on this change in HR policy, and this hour on the plant expansion, and let’s have a briefing by our corporate economist, and we ought to spend three

saying, ‘Gee, my offsites stink.’ But I think there is a general feeling that maybe we’re not getting everything out of these that we should.”

Strategic Offsites starts working with clients anywhere from four to eight weeks before the meeting. “Typically, clients have teams starting to focus on it four weeks out, and you start to get the attention of the senior executives two

hours teambuilding.’ You may get a lot of boxes checked, but nobody is going to look back at that meeting and say it was a really terrific use of our time.

“One of the interesting things about working in the offsite business is that there’s not really a problem there,” he adds. “Nobody is lying awake at night

“I loved the meeting space. ...The grand fireplace was lit to add warmth. We didn’t feel that we were in a business-like meeting room or boardroom.”

Mai Lam
Executive Assistant
to the CEO
USA Water Polo Inc.
Huntington Beach, CA



weeks in advance of the meetings,” Frisch states. Frisch says that one mistake companies often make is to load on too much pre-reading before a strategy meeting. “The management team will be going away for a couple of days and all of a sudden there’s a four-inch binder with articles and book chapters and PowerPoint data.” He says that 90 percent of the reading assigned in advance really has no relevance to the meeting. By going heavier on the post-meeting reading material instead, he explains, the organization has the advantage of selecting the reading material based on topics that were actually discussed at the meeting.

Success Story: It’s the Little Touches...

After the “what” of the meeting is established, planners look for the perfect “where.”

Mai Lam, executive assistant to the CEO of USA Water Polo, Inc., planned a board meeting for 16 attendees last summer. The site she chose was the River Terrace Inn, a 103-room luxury boutique hotel set on the banks of the Napa River in downtown Napa, CA. Its location in the heart of the Napa Valley wine country makes the Inn a convenient base from which to explore the area’s many wineries, shops and galleries. The property, which has 3,000 sf of indoor and outdoor event space including an idyllic riverfront setting, is managed by Noble House Hotels & Resorts.

“As we are a non-profit organization, River Terrace Inn worked graciously right in our budget and their customer service was wonderful,” Lam says. The sales manager “was professional and hospitable,” she says. “I felt that I was really in good hands with her. I couldn’t do a site visit, so I had to trust what I saw on the website. She was so assuring over the phone and made me feel that our group would be well taken care of.”

Lam describes the Inn’s setting: “The lobby/bar/breakfast area was lovely with the whole back wall lined with

windows and double door glass entries. There were a couple of patios with fire pits where guests can sit along the river-side and enjoy their breakfasts. A huge stone fireplace in the lobby offered another relaxing breakfast area. River Terrace Inn exudes a very warm and homey ambience.



The Westin Phoenix Downtown is “very modern, cool and hip,” says Mercedes-Benz USA Special Events Manager Hans Lupold.

“I loved the meeting space,” she continues. “It felt as if we were in a secluded cabin. The grand fireplace was lit to add warmth. We didn’t feel that we were in a business-like meeting room or boardroom. It was very casual and cozy. This made everyone very comfortable and put them all in a jovial mood (to tackle a day-long meeting). And there was plenty of space that they could spread out and take care of business.”

For lunches, Lam’s group used the Inn’s Cuvée restaurant, which specializes in fresh, farm-to-table high country cuisine under the direction of executive chef Jordan Mackey. “The chef did an amazing job,” Lam says. “We selected chicken and grilled hamburgers with an assortment of grilled vegetables, fresh salads and his famous country punch. Everything was delicious. He used the local vegetables and herbs (some grown onsite), and he decked it out. The spread was artfully done and very appetizing. Everyone was very happy with the lunch...not to mention the warm apple cobbler!”

Lam shared one of her favorite highlights of the meeting. “Even though they had had a full lunch, I remembered that at a prior board meeting, a couple

of the directors had asked for some warm chocolate chip cookies for the afternoon. I made sure to put in this order for cookies and brownies. The chefs delivered the cookies right out of the oven. Not one director could resist...the kids in them really surfaced!” she laughs. “It was great fun.”

Lam complimented the sales manager and River Terrace Inn’s catering and sales manager for their ability to anticipate the group’s needs. “I enjoyed working with (them),” she says. “I would love to visit again.”

Success Story: Intimate and Chic

Hans Lupold, special events manager for Mercedes-Benz USA, found his small meeting success at the new 242-room Westin Phoenix Downtown. In July, he brought an incentive program for 85 sales people to the hotel to attend the Major League Baseball All-Star Game at nearby Chase Field.

The event kicked off with a welcome reception at the hotel. “The meeting space for that, the ballroom space, is beautiful,” Lupold says. “It has a kind of intimate, very luxurious feeling, and it worked out really well. The food was really delicious. They did an amazing job.” The hotel’s 3,000-sf Copper Ballroom includes an 84-foot expanse of floor-to-ceiling windows, which overlook downtown Phoenix.

The group attended the Home Run Derby on Monday and the All-Star Game on Tuesday. “On both Monday and Tuesday, we offered lunch in a private room (at The Westin), and it had windows, which was really nice. You don’t find that too much. We set it up, and they could come at their leisure,” he explains. “We had Italian food one day and the other time was a Southwestern-themed lunch.” Westin executive chef David Viviano takes an environmentally responsible approach to creating his menus, which also include Westin SuperFoodsRX, items rich in antioxidants and phytonutrients.

Lupold described what he liked about the hotel. “It’s very modern, cool and hip like the Westins are now. I liked it

a lot. It’s perfect for our brand. The hotel has the biggest hotel rooms I’ve ever seen in my life.” The hotel’s oversized guest rooms measure 540 sf because the building was originally designed as an office building, but plans changed with the downturn in the economy.

“People enjoyed the bar downstairs, as well,” he adds. “It was very lively.” Lupold was impressed by the service levels he received, particularly because the property had only been open for three months. “The general manager was always around checking up on us, and the convention and AV staff was wonderful to work with.”

Lupold says that his group loved the hotel. “They also loved the convenience of the hotel being downtown and being able to walk to the stadium and the restaurants. The city has grown so much, so staying at a city hotel fit perfectly. I liked that. (The Westin) feels almost like a boutique hotel but with the knowledge and support of a larger hotel. It was very intimate.”

Big Savings On Small Meetings

Along with the “where” of the meeting of course is the “how much,” which may reveal “who” really wants your business.

The Boulder Convention & Visitors Bureau has announced that it is making small meetings a big deal. The bureau says that Boulder, which is located 45 minutes from Denver International Airport, is ideal for meetings with 10-300 attendees. The Boulder CVB is offering complimentary services and



The AAA Four Diamond Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs features Western warmth and charm, and IACC-certified conference space.



The Sand Dollar Boardroom at Marina Inn at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Photo courtesy of Marina Inn at Grande Dunes

financial incentives for booking group business during its value season from now through April.

The Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau is offering special incentives for meetings actualized by December 31, 2014. Groups with as few as 50 and as many as 200 peak room nights can choose three offers from the bureau's Southwest Service Package. Ten choices are available, including zero percent attrition, five percent of the master bill donated to the charity of the group's choice, a day of morning and afternoon breaks and a seminar on how to shop for silver and turquoise.

The intimate boutique property Hotel Granduca, located in the Uptown Park/Galleria district in Houston, has a "Suite Meetings Offer." Once meetings are booked, groups receive complimentary upgrades to suite accommodations and welcome amenities for all attendees. Meetings must take place by May 31, 2012.

Also in Houston, the Hotel Sorella CityCentre is offering groups of 10 nights or more special rates starting at \$139 from June–August 2012.

The Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs, CO, is featuring a small meetings value package for groups of 10 rooms or more that includes a complimentary round of golf; welcome amenities for VIPs; complimentary airport shuttle; master account rebates based on group spend; and more.

The Westin Phoenix Downtown has just unveiled a meeting package geared toward smaller meetings that includes meeting room, meals and AV.

The luxurious and secluded Marina Inn at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, SC, is offering value rates starting at \$109 during the month of March.

An unusual and intriguing option for smaller executive groups is being offered for a limited time by the exclusive Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, FL. A rare pre-war vessel The Washingtonian has made port at the resort from now through April 30, 2012. One of only 20 pre-war Trumpys in service today, the 1939-era yacht was fully restored in 2010. The Washingtonian accommodates up to 30 passengers for meetings and events, and up to six for exclusive weekend excursions. There is a spacious covered deck



For a limited time, small groups can charter this fully restored, 1939-era yacht, currently docked at Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, FL, for small meetings and events.

Photo courtesy of Ocean Reef Club

and elegantly appointed salon featuring warm chestnut walls and classic furnishings. Modern touches include a flat-screen television, Wi-Fi and Sirius radio. The Ocean Reef Club property includes a 144-room oceanfront inn, more than 30,000 sf of meeting space, an array of



Hans Lupold
Special Events Manager
Mercedes-Benz USA
Montvale, NJ

"(The Westin) feels almost like a boutique hotel but with the knowledge and support of a larger hotel. It was very intimate."

dining and shopping options, marina, private airstrip, two championship golf courses, spa and salon, and more.

Measuring Success

Frisch described one sure sign that a small meeting has been a success. "The way that we know that a meeting has impact is that a couple of months later, it has a name. People talk about, 'Oh, we discussed that at the Cape Cod meeting' and they'll refer back to when they were together. 'Remember at Cape Cod we talked about so and so? Well, now that's starting to happen. Let's talk about that again.'

"There are occasionally really memorable meetings when people see their time together as some kind of a turning point," he states. "Those don't come easily, and they certainly don't come at the last minute. It usually is because the sponsor or the owner of the meeting really designs the meeting to bring some fresh thinking to the management team."
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The décor at the Montelucia Resort & Spa, including this grand boardroom, is inspired by the Andalusia region of Spain.

Photo courtesy of Montelucia Resort & Spa

Where Service Shines Like the Sun

By Karen Brost

At the end of her sales meeting at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Anne Taylor, senior vice president of sales for Shelton, CT-based semiconductor manufacturer Vishay Americas, noticed that something was missing. “There was not one negative comment,” she states. “When you bring a group of 250 people, they will find something to criticize and complain about. That’s human nature. But people actually went out of their way to write me letters and tell me what a great event it was. That was unprecedented.”

Taylor had checked out Tucson as a potential meetings destination on the advice of a colleague. “I travel all over the world, but I had never been to Tucson. I flew there and was very favorably impressed. I also thought it would be a unique setting for people coming from Germany and Asia who had never been to the desert,” she says, citing the uniqueness of the scenery.

Located in southern Arizona, Tucson is surrounded by five mountain ranges and is bordered, in part, by the Coronado

National Forest and Saguaro National Park. The area boasts 350 days of sunshine a year.

The 398-room Loews Ventana Canyon Resort offers spectacular views of the Santa Catalina Mountains along with 37,000 sf of indoor meeting space and 40,000 sf of outdoor event space, two Fazio-designed PGA golf courses, two pools, a spa and tennis center. It was recently named to *Golf Digest’s* list of “The 75 Best Golf Resorts in North America.”

Taylor was very pleased with the resort’s accommodations and meeting space, but what really stood out was the service. “The service was phenomenal,” she says. “It actually exceeded what I expected. My colleagues and attendees were all impressed. They contacted me to tell me how friendly everyone was, and not just our key contacts, but anybody that you talked to, whether they were serving a meal or you just happened to pass them in the hallway.”

The Vishay attendees took advantage of the property’s golf

and spa facilities, and Taylor worked with the resort’s recreation staff to schedule a desert jeep ride for her guests. “About 115 people went out and had a great time. People got to play with a tarantula and hold a snake, and they were just beside themselves. I was happy for them!” she laughs.

She also had high praise for Loews’ food and beverage service. “Normally, when you have that volume of people, the quality of the food isn’t something that you write home about. But the filet mignon that we had on the formal dinner night was like cutting into butter. The quality of the food was unbelievable.”

Taylor said that her last-minute requests were also handled with ease. “When I had a meeting set up in our executive suite, it was decided that we needed to have a screen. That was not on the order. Within 10–15 minutes max, there was a screen in my room all set up. I don’t think you could have serviced it better.”

Starr-Worthy Service in Tucson

Jeff Paul, director of marketing for Crystal Lake, IL-based truck parts distributor Vihar Heavy Duty, also had a successful event in Tucson. “It acts as a stockholder’s meeting, a sales meeting and a conference between our distributors and suppliers,” he explains. “It has become pretty well-known within the industry as one of the premier meetings to go to.”

He explained his choice of a destination. “Tucson is a big little city,” he says. “Climate is key because with an October meeting, it can be shaky in some other parts of the country that time of year. Most of our attendees come from the East Coast, so it had to be easy enough for them to come in from the east. The airport there (Tucson International Airport) is a modern airport, but it’s small enough to get in and out very quickly.”

His 600-attendee group met at the 575-room JW Marriott Tucson Starr Pass Resort & Spa, which offers 88,000 sf of meeting space, the Starr Pass Country Club and Hashani Spa, along with spectacular views of the surrounding cactus-studded landscape.

Paul stated that his company has been happy with Marriott-branded properties in the past, and the Marriott Starr Pass also turned out to be a great choice. “Going into the meeting, we felt like it fit us like a glove. It had the right amount of meeting space between the two main ballrooms for our trade show, general session and larger events like a keynote lunch. We knew we were going to have the lion’s share of the property for our attendees, so we knew we weren’t going to have to compete with multiple groups being in-house at one time. And then there was the quality of the property. It was built in ’05, so it had the newness to it.”

For their downtime, Vihar’s attendees had a full menu of recreational activities to choose from. Options included a golf tournament, road bike ride, trap and skeet shooting, a desert jeep excursion and tours of the Sonoran Desert Museum and the San Xavier del Bac Mission. “I think we had seven or eight activities going on at one time. They seemed to enjoy that,” he adds.

Paul lauded the resort staff’s dedication to making sure that guests were made to feel welcome. “Somebody doesn’t just walk down the hall and say ‘hello,’” he explains. “They look at your name badge. The level of service and personal attention that all of the staff gave was overwhelming. It was a culture there. It



Photo courtesy of Anne Taylor

“When you bring a group of 250 people, they will find something to criticize. ...But people actually went out of their way to write me letters and tell me what a great event it was.”

Anne Taylor, Senior Vice President of Sales
Vishay Americas, Pendleton, IN



Photo courtesy of Loews Ventana Canyon Resort

Vishay Americas held a sales meeting at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort (above) in Tucson. Vishay’s Senior Vice President of Sales Anne Taylor (top, far right) noted, “The service was phenomenal.”

wasn’t just one or two people that you run into that do a great job. We’ve had great experiences at a lot of different properties, and these guys stood right up with the best of them. The level of service and attention to detail were fantastic.”

More Tucson news: Tucson’s newest hotel, the 215-room Casino Del Sol Hotel, Spa and Conference Center, made its debut in November. The \$100 million property can accommodate up to 1,500 for a theater-style event or up to 800 for a dinner. It also has a spacious lawn that can host outdoor events for up to 3,000 guests. The new hotel is located on the Pascua Yaqui Reservation southwest of downtown Tucson.

The 428-room Hilton El Conquistador Golf & Tennis



The Starr Pass Country Club at JW Marriott Tucson Starr Pass Resort & Spa features 27 holes of championship golf.

Resort is set on 500 acres in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains. The AAA Four Diamond resort offers more than 100,000 sf of indoor and outdoor function space along with 31 lighted tennis courts, 45 holes of championship golf, horseback riding and a wellness center. The hotel is offering a series of "Group Value Dates" throughout 2012 that feature rates 10-30 percent lower than standard seasonal group rates.

The Omni Tucson National Resort is set on 650 acres and features 128 guest rooms, 36 holes of championship golf, 12,000 sf of meeting space, a spa and fitness center. The resort's spa recently achieved AAA Four Diamond status.

Phoenix Goes Pro

Arizona's reputation as a major event destination was further solidified when the NFL selected Phoenix to host Super Bowl XLIX in 2015. This will be the third time the city will host the event since 1996. The area's sunny winter weather, wealth of luxury hotels and resorts, and world-class sports venue, the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, were likely major factors in the decision. Winning the bid is a big deal for the state because the 2008 Super Bowl had an estimated economic impact of \$500 million.

The newest addition to the Phoenix light rail system will be completed well in advance of the next Super Bowl. The new \$1.1 billion driverless people mover called the PHX Sky Train will begin transporting passengers between Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and the light rail system in 2013. Current light rail routes include downtown Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa.

For the first time, Marriott has a presence in downtown Phoenix. The former Wyndham Phoenix was reflagged as the Marriott Renaissance Hotel in December. The 447-room hotel is located adjacent to the Phoenix Convention Center and offers 60,000 sf of meeting space.

Planners in search of an all-suite resort in the heart of the city may want to consider the 563-suite Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort. Set on the slopes of the Phoenix North Mountain

range just minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, the resort features 48,000 sf of indoor and outdoor meeting space, including a recently updated Palacio event venue, a free-standing, 6,362-sf space with multiple levels. The resort's Hole-in-the-Wall River Ranch is a water park with four acres of pools and waterfalls, and a lazy river. Golf is available just minutes away at the Lookout Mountain Golf Club.

Success in Scottsdale

Joshua Rice, account manager for the third-party planning firm Creative Group Inc., recently brought a pharmaceutical group with 180 attendees to the luxurious Montelucia Resort & Spa in Scottsdale. "They just love the hotel," he says. "It's their Phoenix (area) hot spot. It's always on their short list."

With an elegant design inspired by the Andalusia region of Spain, the Montelucia is filled with courtyards, arched walkways and fountains. It features 293 rooms, 27,000 sf of meeting and event space, and Joya, a 30,000-sf Moroccan-themed spa.

"We did an opening welcome reception at the pool, which has an amazing landscape," Rice explains. "You don't need to put much décor there with Camelback Mountain in the background. We had a lot of space heaters because it was November,



"(Montelucia's staff is) fully flexible. They have no problem gutting rooms to make them breakouts. They want to make it work and be a true partner, which is great."

Joshua Rice, Account Manager
Creative Group Inc., Buffalo Grove, IL

but the attendees didn't mind because the whole pool area has a great vibe to it."

Rice appreciated the staff's flexibility. When it was determined that the resort's Alhambra ballroom was too big for the group, they got creative with air walls and made it work. "They're fully flexible. They have no problem gutting rooms to make them breakouts. They want to make it work and be a true partner, which is great."

Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort in Phoenix features the Hole-in-the-Wall River Ranch water park with four acres of pools and waterfalls, and a lazy river.



Photo courtesy of Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort

He said that the Montelucia is his personal favorite hotel in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area. "The rooms are big. The bathrooms are spacious. Every room has a couch, so if you're a business traveler, you can sit on the couch and work or you can sit at the desk or sit on your bed. The rooms are spacious enough to allow all that."

Rice did a dine-around event for his group that had a team-building element to it to encourage attendees to meet new people. "Everyone was given a puzzle piece, and you had to find your group to build your puzzle to find out where you were going (to dinner)," he explains. The company hosted a cocktail reception at the resort before loading the group on buses to head to six different restaurants. "It was great," he adds.

On the final day of the program, the West Coast attendees traveled home while the East Coast travelers stayed overnight and departed in the morning. "The hotel had a grab-and-go hot breakfast ready for them on the front drive," Rice notes.

Also located in Scottsdale, on the north slope of Camelback Mountain, Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Resort & Spa offers 105 private casita accommodations and seven private mountainside homes. The resort's premier event space is aptly named The Views, because the 3,500-sf venue contains floor-to-ceiling windows and a wraparound terrace that deliver stunning mountain and sunset views.

Sanctuary is offering two new options for fun teambuilding events. One is a cooking competition judged by the resort's



The 404-room Scottsdale Plaza Resort offers a total of 40,000 sf of meeting space, including this main ballroom.

executive chef, Beau MacMillan, who also happens to be a "Food Network" star. The other is "Mixology 101," an interactive cocktail mixing experience at the resort's Jade Bar where guests learn tips, techniques and tales about cocktail culture, then pick up some recipe cards to take home.

In other Scottsdale news, Joie de Vivre Hotels recently opened The Saguaro, the company's first property outside of California. Long-time planners might recall the property's earlier "lives" as the Hotel Theodore, the Mondrian and the James Hotel. The 194-room hotel, located in Old Town Scottsdale, contains 10,000 sf of meeting space and a signature restaurant, Distrito, which showcases the street foods of Mexico City.

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Photo courtesy of Talking Stick Resort

The Orange Sky event patio at Scottsdale's Talking Stick Resort affords panoramic views of the surrounding desert landscape.

The hotel's designer has chosen a vivid color palette of pink, green, orange and yellow to mimic the wildflowers found in Scottsdale's desert landscape.

The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess has broken ground on a new \$20 million conference center, which is expected to open in October 2012. The 52,331-sf space will include the new 23,000-sf Palomino Ballroom, which will have walls that open to the outdoors. The new addition will bring the resort's total meeting space to 150,000 sf, making it the largest meetings resort in Fairmont's portfolio worldwide.

The Scottsdale Resort & Conference Center, which is managed by Benchmark Hospitality, recently partnered with the nonprofit organization Clean the World to donate its "gently used" bath amenities to the organization. Clean the World then sanitizes the products and distributes them to help prevent the spread of disease in developing countries and homeless shelters. In the first month of the program, the resort donated approximately 3,000 bars of soap and 2,500 bottled amenities such as body lotion, shampoos and conditioners to Clean the World.



Photo courtesy of Enchantment Resort

The outdoor event terrace at Enchantment Resort offers a fitting backdrop — the enchanting red rock vistas of Sedona.

Set on 40 acres in the heart of Scottsdale, The Scottsdale Plaza Resort serves as an oasis in the city with its mountain views, palm trees, five swimming pools, Salon & Day Spa, lighted tennis courts and nine-hole putting green. It is conveniently located just 25 minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. The resort offers 404 guest rooms, 180 of which are suites. Its 40,000 sf of meeting space is versatile. It includes 21 meeting rooms with 58 breakout suites and what the resort describes as "the area's finest acoustically perfect amphitheater." Live jazz entertains at Remington's Lounge six nights a week. A grand opening was held in early January for Scottsdale Resort's newly renovated fitness center, which

offers group classes that are proving to be quite popular with meeting attendees, says the resort's spokesperson.

The AAA Four Diamond, 497-room Talking Stick Resort offers 100,000 sf of indoor and outdoor function space, which includes the 25,000-sf Salt River Grand ballroom and 21 other meeting rooms. The resort, located just 15 minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, also offers so many dining and entertainment options that attendees won't have to go off property unless they really want to. The resort includes a 240,000-sf gaming floor, five dining venues and live entertainment in the resort's 650-seat showroom. With its 15th-floor vantage point, the signature Orange Sky restaurant offers stunning panoramic views, and the Orange Sky Lounge features three outdoor patios. The Troon-managed Talking Stick Golf Club is also located just minutes away, as is Salt River Fields, the new spring training home of the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies.

Spectacular Sedona

Sedona, one of the most photographed destinations in the world, is just a two-hour drive north of Phoenix. It is also home to Enchantment Resort, a luxury property surrounded by the spectacular red rock beauty of Boynton Canyon.

Enchantment, which also includes the award-winning destination spa Mii Amo, recently completed phase two of

a renovation project that included the refurbishing of all 218 guest rooms. The redesign, inspired by Native American traditions, includes onyx vanity tops, custom lamps with hammered metal finishes, headboard designs with the sun symbol of the Yavapai Nation and Native American patterned tapestries. New electronics, including 42-inch HDTVs, custom desk lamps with recharging capabilities and Bose iPod docking stations have also been added. The project follows on the heels

of the resort's \$4 million expansion of its Meeting Village, which offers 13,000 sf of indoor space and an additional 20,000 sf of outdoor function areas.

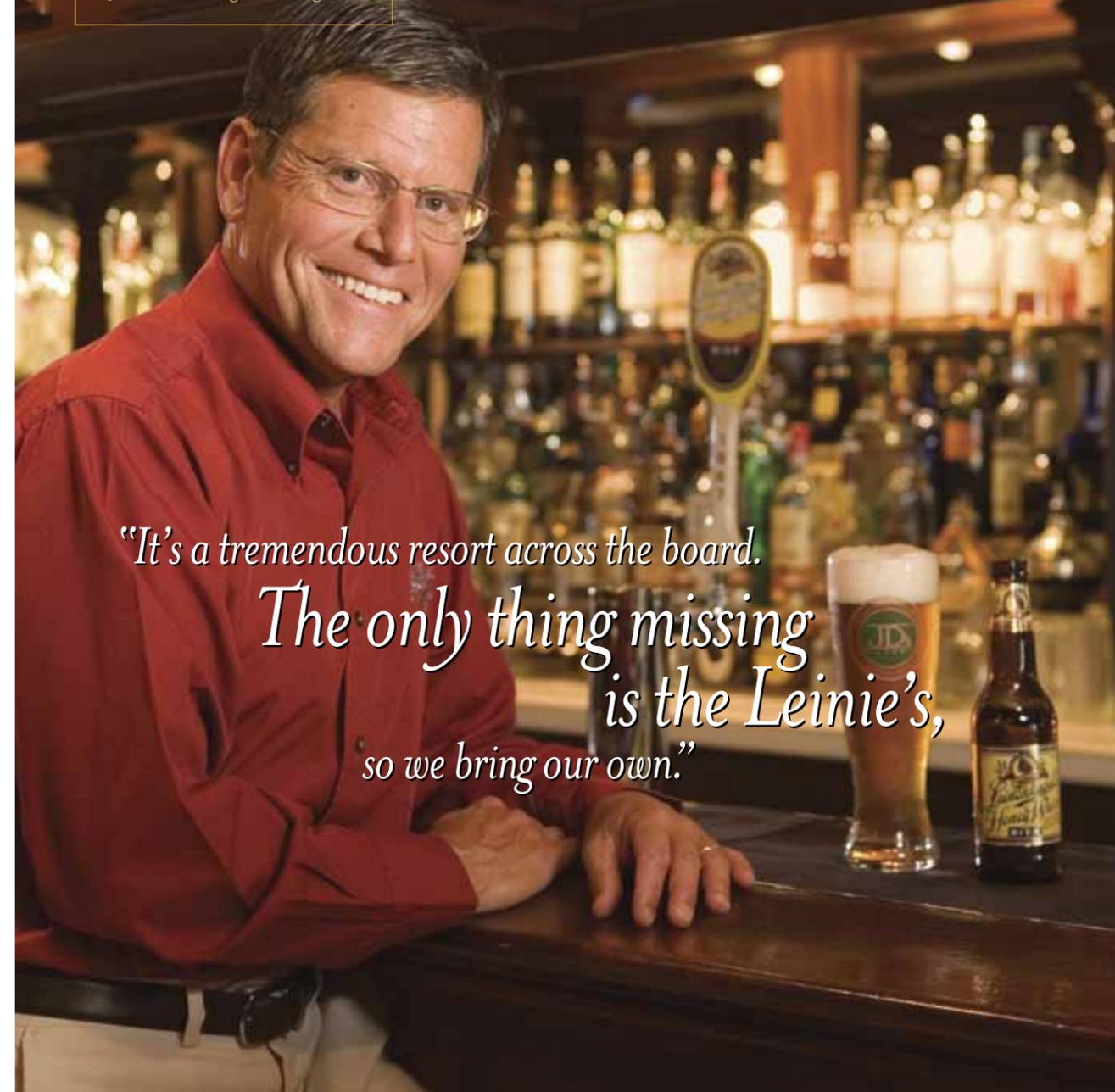
Service With a Smile

The high service standards many groups have experienced at Arizona's hotels and resorts make the attendees' experiences more enjoyable and the planners' lives easier. So it's only natural to want to return. That's what Rice and his client have found with their experiences at Montelucia.

"They love the hotel. We're trying to make it work next year to go back there."
C&IT

PLAZA PROFILES

Jake Leinenkugel
President
Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Co.



"It's a tremendous resort across the board. The only thing missing is the Leinie's, so we bring our own."

Jake Leinenkugel rewards his "all-Leinie team" — 130 of the top Leinenkugel distributors — with a trip to The Scottsdale Plaza Resort every year. And after 8+ years, he couldn't imagine going anywhere else. As he says, "They're the friendliest and most accommodating group of folks I've met in my 50+ years. They know us so well, they can almost read our minds. It feels like your own little oasis — homey and relaxing. We used to plan off-site activities, but our people would rather just hang at The Plaza. Everything's right here. The setting, the food, the service — it's just a delight to be here."

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What's New

IN New York AND New Jersey

By Derek Reveron

Imagine that you and your client are on a whirlwind site visit to New York City, attempting to squeeze four hotel site visits into a one-day visit. A four-day product introduction and business strategy meeting for 225 pharmaceutical company executives, sales people and researchers from the United States and abroad is on the drawing board. You seek a high standard of service, and have yet to make a decision before arriving at the day's last site visit. At the final hotel, you are weary but bolt awake as the over-the-top presentation unfolds.

That's what happened to Andrea Strauss, president of Hackensack, NJ-based Classic Conferences Inc. Strauss, a veteran planner who travels more than 40 weeks a year, has

staged many meetings in New York City. She is accustomed to receiving superlative service during site visits and meetings. However, in this instance, the Crowne Plaza Times Square blew away the competition by providing an unmatched level of service and attention to detail, says Strauss.

Strauss and her pharmaceutical company client were amazed at the level of preparation the hotel undertook for the site visit. Strauss explains, "They had set up meeting rooms the way they would look the day of meeting. The conference room was arranged to the last detail with the stage, tables, piping, drapes, chairs and tables. The AV equipment we would use was set up. They had a breakout room set up with a conference table and 12 chairs, which is exactly what I needed. Hotels hardly do that. They even did their homework on what I and my customer like for drinks and snacks. When we ended the site visit and went to the concierge lounge, everything they had was what we liked," says Strauss.

She had found her hotel. "The fact that they were so ready for my group made a huge difference. That's what closed the deal for me. The way they showed the property was perfect. They wanted the business, and they showed it. If they did their homework for a site inspection, I could only imagine what they would do for my group," says Strauss.

She imagined correctly. As the meeting drew to a close, heavy snow fell in New York City. About half of the group was stranded. "The hotel extended everybody's stay for the same rate they paid for the meeting. We were also able to use the ballroom another day if we needed it, but we didn't. Also, the concierge helped me get 75 Broadway theater tickets within an hour. What began as a horrible day turned out to be a great evening," says Strauss. "I was thrilled with the service from start to finish and would definitely return," she adds.

With more than 23,500 sf of flexible function space, the 770-room Crowne Plaza Times Square features the Crowne Meeting Success Program: Planners start with a sales manager who understands their industry and can provide a two-hour response guarantee. Then, after a meeting is booked, the planner partners with a Crowne Meeting Director — a trained, certified meeting professional who helps with every detail. The hotel features two ballrooms and 25 function rooms.

New York, New York

A variety of meeting hotels is available throughout New York City. About 40 percent of New York City's 2011 hotel openings were in the boroughs of Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens and Staten Island, according to NYC & Company. However, Manhattan is home to many of the city's most popular hotels, including the following:

The Sheraton New York Hotel & Towers is working on phase two of its \$150 million renovation, launched in December 2011. Phase two includes additional guest room renovations and is scheduled for completion in April 2012. During the first phase, Sheraton began expanding and renovating its 1,080 guest rooms and suites. The redesigned rooms received a fresh look and colors, new graphic patterns, low credenzas and wall-

Top Five Reasons to Meet, Eat and Retreat in NY & NJ

- 1. Performing Arts.** Energetic musicals, heart-wrenching dramas, hilarious comedies, politically charged indies. No matter what your entertainment taste is, New York has a show for your next program. Roughly 90 percent of all groups attend a Broadway show, which one will you attend?
- 2. Sports.** New York has an impressive sports heritage; it is the only city in the U.S. with more than one team in all of the four most popular professional sports in America. Including New Jersey, the NYC metropolitan area has the most professional sports teams in the nation. And all of them are housed in a state-of-the-art stadium with very impressive private suites for your attendees.
- 3. Cultural Diversity.** NYC has always been known as the Melting Pot. Manhattan is full of cultural enclaves which give you the opportunity to experience the best foods, festivals, arts and more from all over the globe.
- 4. Transportation.** With three airports, 13,237 licensed taxis, 16 bridges, 835 miles of subway track, ferries and hubs such as Grand Central Station, groups can get everywhere and anywhere they need to be with ease.
- 5. Restaurants & Venues.** The area might be famous for amazing bagels and pizza, but it's the gourmet fare that makes this area a true



Photo by Joe Cingrana

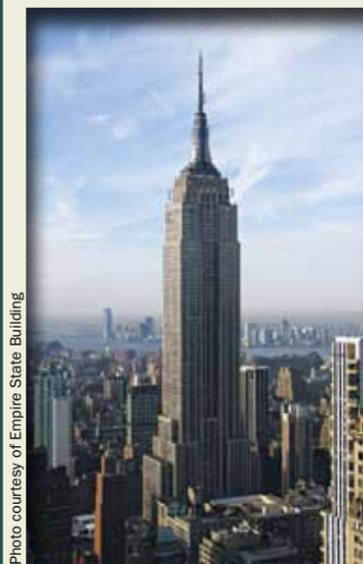


Photo courtesy of Empire State Building

culinary destination. Groups have literally hundreds of restaurants and venues to choose from, and with culinary options from all over the world, there's almost no craving that can't be filled in this city. "Top Five Reasons" courtesy of Patrick Sullivan, president, AlliedPRA Destination Management New York. **C&IT**



Photo courtesy of Crowne Plaza Times Square

(Above) Recently redesigned, the Crowne Plaza Times Square is conveniently located in the middle of Manhattan's most vibrant and iconic destination. (Right) The Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City is currently undergoing a \$50 million renovation, which is slated for completion by spring.



Photo courtesy of Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa

mounted flat-panel TVs. The first phase also included a redesign of the Sheraton Club Lounge and a new Cisco TelePresence Suite, with state-of-the-art video conferencing and panoramic views from the 44th floor. In addition, about 35,000 sf of event and prefunction space have been redesigned. The hotel has more than 55,000 sf of meeting space with 43 meeting rooms.

The New York Marriott Marquis is scheduled to complete the renovation of its 1,943 guest rooms and suites in spring 2012. The \$39 million project includes the 29,025-sf Broadway Ballroom, the hotel's largest meeting space. The high-tech ball-

room features color-changing LED chandeliers and a black ceiling that can be transformed to match specific themes. The makeover also includes the lobby and two restaurants and lounges. The hotel offers 101,450 sf of meeting space.

Completed in 1924 and known as the Grand Dame of Madison Avenue, the Roosevelt Hotel is undergoing a multi-million dollar redesign and upgrade scheduled for completion in February 2012. The project includes the Madison Club Lounge and the hotel's 1,015 guest rooms and suites, which will be fitted with new furniture, carpeting, fixtures and artwork. Two ballrooms and 23 function rooms provide a total of 30,000 sf of meeting space.

Another hotel, the Grand Hyatt New York, has completed its \$130 million renovation. The face-lift includes 1,306 redesigned guest rooms and suites, the Empire Ballroom and the addition of the Gallery on Lex, a new 4,400-sf social event area. The renovation also encompassed the New York Central restaurant as well as the lobby and mezzanine. About 60,000 sf of meeting space is available.

The 217-room W New York Downtown hotel has launched green initiatives that include energy and water conservation, recycling, organic waste composting and sustainable food and beverage options. The hotel offers four meeting spaces, the largest of which is 1,320 sf.

New York City offers many hotels with stately old-world charm, including the Waldorf=Astoria New York. The charm is one of the reasons why Dilip Rangnekar, director of emerging markets and sales development for Farmington, CT-based Otis Elevator Company, selected the Waldorf=Astoria for a three-day meeting of 100 international executives in late 2010. "It is purely an iconic building, but we were looking at other properties. One of my concerns was that a meeting of only 100 would get lost in such a large property. And we expect on-the-ball service. That was the first thing I expressed when we met with the hotel," says Rangnekar, who planned the meeting.

The Waldorf=Astoria, which offers 1,416 guest rooms and 60,000 sf of function space, exceeded Rangnekar's expectations. The hotel provided a designated area where guests could check in and avoid lines. Wines that the group requested were

acquired prior to the meeting. Rangnekar and his clients sampled menu items during the site visit. The hotel staff and in-house AV department quickly changed the lighting, table clothes, backdrops and room color schemes between meetings and presentations. "With the AV, we used every media format you can imagine, including downloaded music, PowerPoint, video and audio, and live microphones. You have to carefully sequence an event like this. You are constantly keeping screens active. The technical crew supplied by the Waldorf was phenomenal," says Rangnekar.

"With the AV, we used every media format you can imagine. ...The technical crew supplied by the Waldorf was phenomenal."

Dilip Rangnekar, Director of Emerging Markets and Sales Development, Otis Elevator, Farmington, CT

Throughout the meeting, the Waldorf=Astoria staff rapidly responded to the smallest detail. Rangnekar cites an example: "We had a 30-minute break just outside a meeting room. One of the guys from the Waldorf was serving coffee and tea when I heard someone ask for an espresso. He says you can

have it in 30 seconds. He left and quickly returned with an espresso machine. It was an instantaneous hit. We never anticipated espressos. They didn't charge us for it," says Rangnekar.

On the last evening of the meeting, the hotel staff took fewer than two hours after the final session to transform a room into a fancy "lounge bar." The room featured blue lighting, white leather seats, two bars and a stage. Teams of executives from different regions participated in a performance competition. For example, one group sang "YMCA," but changed the lyrics to relate to the company's competitors. Employees served as judges and used a "laugh-o-meter" that measured the loudness of applause for the various groups. The winning group received a check that Otis donated to a New York charity.

Rangnekar was also pleased with the value the Waldorf=Astoria provided. "Some people perceive the Waldorf as expensive, but there is a lot of value in what you receive. I was told by our president that our budget would be only slightly more than we spent last time, and we managed to stay within it. We worked with the Waldorf and they worked with us. We did well," says Rangnekar. Comments on the post-meeting survey included "the best ever Otis meeting," "exceptional food," "content rich" and "very creative," he adds.

When it comes to convention and meeting space, New York is home to the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, which offers 840,000 sf of exhibit space and 103,204 sf of meeting space. An ongoing expansion and renovation will add 40,000 sf to the center. The project also includes a new roof, skylights, upgraded building and safety systems, and a refurbished curtain wall. Additionally, the facility's main entrances will be enlarged and its electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems will undergo upgrades. The renovation is scheduled for completion by the end of 2013.

During his state of the state address in early January, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo proposed a plan to build a new

3.8-million-sf exhibition hall and hotel at the Aqueduct racetrack in Jamaica, Queens. The new center would be a joint venture with the Malaysia-based Genting Group, which already manages a gambling hall at the racetrack and plans to finance the \$4 billion project. The governor says the Javits Center, which sits on very valuable, state-owned waterfront property, is too small to compete with the convention centers. "We will make New York the No. 1 convention site in the nation," said Cuomo in his speech.

New York City also has a vast array of unique venues of varying sizes that meet every group's size and budget. Planners seeking a 1930s art deco-style venue will find it at the Edison Ballroom. The 17,000-sf space originally opened in the 1930s as the ballroom of the Edison Hotel. Today, the venue hosts events ranging from corporate meetings to musical performances.

Another historic venue Gotham Hall is one of New York's most prominent upscale meeting and event spaces. The facility was built in 1922-24 as the Greenwich Savings Bank building. Today, Gotham Hall's seven-story gilded ballroom can host up to 1,200 guests amid elegant old-world architecture that includes a gilded ceiling and a 3,000-sf stained-glass skylight.

Additional venues include the elegant Midtown Loft & Terrace with meeting spaces of 5,000 sf and 3,400 sf, and for larger events, Madison Square Garden offers a 20,000-sf arena and the 9,500-sf Garden Terrace.

No city in the modern world offers a wider variety of iconic attractions and historic buildings and cultural sites than New York City. The 102-story Empire State Building, the city's tallest structure, which underwent a \$550 million art deco-style renovation, rents spaces for corporate functions. A room that accommodates 300 guests features a full-floor, 360-degree view of Manhattan. A space on the 80th floor hosts up to 150 people. A second-floor event space accommodates 500 people and showcases a multimedia exhibit spotlighting the building's sustainability retrofit.

Another must-visit place is Chinatown, one of the largest such communities in the Western Hemisphere. Chinatown is home to more than 200 restaurants, the Museum of Chinese



Inspired by the architecture of ancient Rome, Caesars Atlantic City offers more than 1,100 guest rooms and suites.

in America, the Mahayana Buddhist Temple and a large shopping district. Also, the Statue of Liberty, located on 12-acre Ellis Island, features the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. The museum provides private meeting spaces that accommodate up to 1,000 people.

Atlantic City, New Jersey

Atlantic City is a popular meeting and convention destination. Located within a five-hour drive of about one-third of the U.S. population, Atlantic City is a magnet for corporate groups located in the Northeast. The city offers an ample supply of meeting and convention space, headlined by the Atlantic City Convention Center, one of the East Coast's largest meeting venues. The facility holds more than 486,600 sf of exhibit space, more than 109,000 sf of meeting space and the latest voice, data and video systems.

Atlantic City's casino resorts also offer a plentiful supply of meeting space, which will increase when Revel Atlantic City opens in spring 2012 as scheduled. The \$2.4 million, 6.3 million-sf beachfront entertainment resort will be Atlantic City's first new resort to open since 2003. Revel will include more than 1,095 guest rooms, 22 meeting rooms and more than 160,000 sf of convention and meeting space, including the 70,000-sf Ovation Hall featuring a 30,000-sf ballroom and a 15,000-sf amphitheater. The resort will also offer a 150,000-sf casino, a 30,000-sf spa and several restaurants. Famed chef Jose Garces, chef/owner of 12 restaurants in Philadelphia, Chicago and Scottsdale, will open Amada, Village Whiskey and Distrito Cantina at Revel. Also, celebrated chef Marc Forgione will join Revel with the opening of American Cut, a new American steakhouse — his first restaurant outside of his Restaurant Marc Forgione in New York. Chef Robert Wiedmaier just signed to open Mussel Bar at Revel — the first extension of his popular gastro-pub. Reminiscent of a roadside tavern in the Belgian countryside, Mussel Bar will feature the comfort of a pub, live rock 'n' roll, the energy of a sports bar and culinary excellence.

Other existing properties are renovating and expanding. The Golden Nugget Atlantic City, formerly Trump Marina Casino Hotel, recently opened its Rush Lounge and Live Bar as part of its ongoing \$150 million renovation program of the entire hotel. The project includes guest rooms, meeting rooms, the atrium and casino floor, a spa and salon, and a pool and bar. Additionally, the hotel is adding several new restaurants and shops, including Red Shushi, Grotto Italian Ristorante, Cool Jeans Clothing Co. and the Chocolate Box Confectionery. The hotel also features the Wine and WiFi Lounge, outfitted with leather chairs and couches, and set up with wireless Internet, computers, work stations and printers. The Golden Nugget offers more than 700 rooms and more than 45,000 sf of meeting space.

One of the largest hotels in New Jersey, the Tropicana Casino & Resort plans to expand Tango's Lounge, adding 1,000 sf of space by the end of March 2012. The space will include 30 new seats and a new dance area. In another move, the Tropicana is adding slot machines to a central area of



F&B offerings at the Tropicana Casino & Resort Atlantic City range from elegant affairs to box lunches for the beach.

The Quarter, the hotel's indoor mall. The Quarter includes 200,000 sf of retail, dining and entertainment plus an IMAX Theater. The Tropicana offers 2,129 guest rooms and more than 122,000 sf of meeting space.

Johnson Controls Inc., a Milwaukee-based diversified technology and industrial company, recently held a two-day annual regional planning and review meeting at the Tropicana. The event included about 90 executives from the region covering Virginia, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC, Maryland, West Virginia and New Jersey. Jan Bryan, regional administrative leader, Johnson Controls, planned the meeting and plans more than 10 others annually with the number of attendees ranging from 20 to about 100 people. "It's about the third or fourth time we have used the Tropicana for meetings. It offers a combination of good room rates combined with a fairly easy-to-get-to location from across our region. There is gaming for those who choose it, it has many venues for eating, and it's close to other places," says Bryan.

The meeting included a boardroom function, awards dinner and group meetings. "The awards dinner we have each year is always well received, with the food always being excellent and the bar set up and well run. There are always needs that come up that you can't anticipate. So what's most important to me is the responsiveness of the people you're working with, from the salesperson to the people who handle rooms, food and business items," adds Bryan.

The Tropicana's staff was Johnny-on-the-spot when needed. She cites an example: "We had more people than we had anticipated for one meeting. When we got to the room and everybody started filing in, we realized it wasn't big enough. We told the hotel that we had to immediately change the configuration. People just jumped in and helped us do what we needed to do," says Bryan. "The reaction and feedback have been positive around the meeting as well as the location," she adds.

In December 2011, Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa announced a \$1 million renovation of its poker room and the debut of a high-limit poker lounge called The Boardroom. The hotel is currently undergoing a \$50 million renovation to refurbish 2,000 guest rooms, residences and hotel corridors by spring 2012.

The hotel offers 70,000 sf of event space, 161,000 sf of gaming space and a 54,000-sf spa. A sister property, the cosmopolitan Water Club at Borgata, has 800 rooms, a 36,000-sf spa and 18,000 sf of meeting space.

The Borgata is known for its culinary talent. Recently, the Water Club's Culinary Lifestyle Consultant Geoffrey Zakarian, was crowned Iron Chef on the Fourth Season finale of Food Network's "The Next Iron Chef: Super Chefs." Zakarian, the third chef/partner from Borgata to be named Iron Chef, joins Bobby Flay (Bobby Flay Steak) and Wolfgang Puck (Wolfgang Puck American Grille) in the esteemed ranking.

In addition, other Borgata world-renowned chefs under one roof include Michael Mina (Seablue, A Michael Mina Restaurant), Michael Schulson (Izakaya – A Modern Japanese Pub), Stephen Kalt (Fornelitto Cucina & Wine Bar), and restaurateurs Greg & Marc Sherry (Old Homestead Steak House). Borgata also offers an impressive wine collection of more than 40,000 vintages.

Caesars Atlantic City, one of 38 Caesars Entertainment properties, offers more than 1,100 guest rooms and suites, and 30,000 sf of meeting space, which includes 14 meeting rooms, the largest offering 17,135 sf of space. Caesars is also home to 125,000 sf of gaming space, the 1,500-sf Maximus Theater and the Pier Shops at Caesars.

Attendees who drive to Atlantic City will have more parking options later this year. The Casino Reinvestment Development Authority is building a new \$38.4 million parking garage. The facility will include 1,182 parking spaces, 16,170 sf of retail space and a 50,000-sf rooftop solar panel. The garage will be located near the Atlantic City Convention Center.

Atlantic City offers many one-of-a-kind venues that typically are located within a relatively short distance of the city's resorts. Boardwalk Hall, located at the center of the world-famous Boardwalk, is a renovated arena that hosts a variety of events and meetings. The largest of the facility's six meeting spaces is 23,100 sf. The Atlantic City Aquarium provides more than 100 marine-life exhibits on three floors. Groups can meet in the Harborview Room, which accommodates up to 100 people. Atlantic City is also home to the historic Absecon Lighthouse, the third tallest such structure in the U.S. Built in 1857, the top of the lighthouse offers mesmerizing views of Atlantic City. Absecon's museum, formerly the Keeper's House, showcases memorabilia from the 1800s. Groups can reserve the lighthouse and grounds for private meetings and events.

Many of Atlantic City's major attractions are located on or near the Boardwalk. The Steel Pier offers 25 rides and attractions, Ferris wheel, Wet Boats, Mini Rockets and helicopter rides. The Steel Pier also provides fun teambuilding events for corporate groups. Ripley's Believe It or Not museum features bizarre and fascinating interactive exhibits, artifacts and curiosities. Exhibits range from a shrunken head to the world's smallest production car. Ripley's is available for private corporate functions. Located on historic Garden Pier, the Atlantic City Art Museum originally opened in 1908. The museum features sculptures, paintings and photos by U.S. artists. **C&IT**



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ON THE MOVE



MASTERTSON

Michael Mancke was named director of sales and marketing at Plantation on Crystal River, Crystal River, FL. He formerly was director of Florida sales for the Miles Media Group in Sarasota, FL.

The Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau has named **Jay Marsh** as regional director of sales. He previously served as the DCVB's director of national accounts in the Washington, DC, regional office.

Michael Masterson was named director of sales and marketing for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Hawaii, which is comprised of three resorts: The Westin Kaanapali Ocean Resort Villas, The Westin Maui Resort & Spa, Kaanapali and Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa. Masterson, who has more than 20 years of experience in hotel sales and marketing, most recently served as director of sales and marketing for The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua.

Chateau on the Lake, Branson, MO, has named **David Hume** as director of sales. He most recently served as director of sales and marketing for Mission Point Resort, Mackinac Island, MI.

NYC & Company, the official marketing, tourism and partnership organization of New York City, has announced the appointment of **Rachael Nocera**, CMP, to regional director, national accounts, Midwest region, based in the Chicago area. She previously worked as manager, meeting and convention sales with Tourism Vancouver in Chicago.

Laura Van Winkle-Mascari was named senior sales manager for Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa, Kona, HI. She was marketing and club coordinator at Hilton Grand Vacations in Waikoloa.

Jim Pedone was named director of sales and marketing at Miramonte Resort & Spa, Indian Wells, CA. With more than 20 years of luxury hotel experience, he most recently was executive director of sales and marketing for La Quinta Resort & Club and PGA West, La Quinta, CA.



HUME



PEDONE



FAIRE



SPAULDING

The Santa Fe Convention & Visitors Bureau, Santa Fe, NM, has named **Debra Stottlemeyer** as sales manager. She most recently served as director of sales at Hotel Andaluz in Albuquerque, NM.

Paige Cabacungan was named director of sales and marketing for The St. Regis Princeville Resort, Kauai, HI. Cabacungan, who brings more than 22 years of hospitality sales and marketing experience, formerly served as director of sales and marketing for The Westin Maui Resort & Spa and The Westin Kaanapali Ocean Resort Villas.

The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin, Lake Buena Vista, FL, has named **Angel M. Faire** as national sales manager for the Midwest region, responsible for corporate groups. She previously served as senior sales manager for the Hilton in the Walt Disney World Resort, Lake Buena Vista, FL.

The Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate in Orlando, FL, has named **Jean Spaulding** as director of sales and marketing. She formerly served as senior vice president, resort sales and marketing, Noble Investment Group, Atlanta, GA.

Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe, VT, has named **Paul Richey** as director of sales and marketing. He formerly served as director of sales and marketing at Basin Harbor Club, Vergennes, VT. **C&IT**

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