Cover photo: The Broadmoor, grande dame of the Rockies, in Colorado Springs.

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Publisher’s Message

Excellence Is Always in Style

The Broadmoor is 31 for 31. The stately “Grande Dame of the Rockies,” which appears on our cover this month, has won the Corporate & Incentive Travel magazine’s Award of Excellence for 31 consecutive years. Fittingly, The Broadmoor also is the longest consecutive winner of the Forbes Five Star and AAA Five Diamond awards for excellence. The first convention ever held at The Broadmoor was in 1918, soon after the hotel’s grand opening, and the iconic hotel continues every year to stand at the forefront of world-class facilities, amenities and service. To learn why Colorado provides such great options for your corporate meetings, event and incentives, see our cover story “A Singular Sense of Place — Colorado’s Topography, History and Spirit Offer Up a Powerful Experience” on page 28. Also turn to page 50 in the special Award of Excellence section for more coverage of The Broadmoor, which is set on 3,000 pristine acres in Colorado Springs — a place of such beauty that Katharine Lee Bates was inspired after a visit to the top of Pikes Peak to write “America the Beautiful.”

Not surprisingly, many luminaries, heads of state and U.S. presidents have visited The Broadmoor, including Presidents Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, Reagan, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, to name a few. As you might expect, historic hotels and resorts with excellent levels of service and extraordinary amenities are always highly sought after by savvy meeting pros and very well received by attendees. For more examples and fascinating stories, see page 22 for “Meet Where the Presidents Meet — Hotels Favored by Heads of State Are Highly Desirable for VIPs and Corporate Events.”

Discover more great ideas from fellow planners on page 16 in “Adventures in Teambuilding — It’s Not Just All Fun and Games, It’s Working Together Toward a Common Goal,” and on page 10, review the latest legal issues in “Shocking and Care to Legal Matters.”

We salute all the winners of our 31st Awards of Excellence and invite you to read about the success of many of the winners featured in this annual section beginning on page 34.

Harvey Grotsky
Publisher
Eau Palm Beach Launches New Programs

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

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

New executive chef Josh Thomsen will premiere exciting new menus, and the Breeze Ocean Kitchen will introduce a dramatic new design, menu focus and personality. Open daily from sunrise to sunset, the new restaurant and lounge will bring a modern touch to each room. Guests will enjoy the hotel’s new custom designed light bar, new daily light bite menus of Floridian flavors, juice program, vintage cocktails and light bite menus of Floridian flavors.

Richard Harper to Co-Chair MMB

WASHINGTON, DC — The Meetings Mean Business Coalition (MMB), a cross-industry communications and advocacy initiative, appointed Richard Harper, executive vice president at HelmsBriscoe, as the coalition co-chair, who will work with fellow co-chair Michael Dominguez, senior vice president and chief sales officer at MGM Resorts International, to lead the organization. MMB will expand upon the success of this year’s North American Meetings Industry Day by working with partners around the world to host 2016’s Global Meetings Industry Day. The new program transforms and simplifies the world of hotel loyalty programs for planners.

As of October 13, 2015, planners who are members of the Wyndham Rewards loyalty program can earn one point for every dollar spent on qualifying revenue at participating hotels, regardless of billing method. “The rising demand for group and meetings travel, coupled with an industry full of complicated rewards programs, gives us a unique opportunity to deliver more value and gain planners’ trust, business and loyalty,” said Geoff Ballotti, president and CEO, Wyndham Hotel Group. “With go meet, we’re recognizing planners around the world for their partnership, hard work and the business they bring to our hotels.”

For more information on go meet and full terms and conditions, visit www.wyndhamrewards.com/go-meanings.

Wyndham Unveils Rewards Program

PARSIPPANY, NJ — Billed as the world’s most generous rewards program for meeting planners, “go meet” launched at IMEX America 2015 in Las Vegas. The new program transforms and simplifies the world of hotel loyalty programs for planners.

As of October 13, 2015, planners who are members of the Wyndham Rewards loyalty program can earn one point for every dollar spent on qualifying revenue at participating hotels, regardless of billing method. “The rising demand for group and meetings travel, coupled with an industry full of complicated rewards programs, gives us a unique opportunity to deliver more value and gain planners’ trust, business and loyalty,” said Geoff Ballotti, president and CEO, Wyndham Hotel Group. “With go meet, we’re recognizing planners around the world for their partnership, hard work and the business they bring to our hotels.”

For more information on go meet and full terms and conditions, visit www.wyndhamrewards.com/go-meanings.

Turnberry Isle Miami Debuts New Guest Rooms

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

www.meetingsmeanbusiness.com

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CUBA: Everything Old Is New Again

A sk Americans what first comes to mind when you mention Cuba and you’ll usually get a simple answer. If you were born in 1950 or before you were probably glued to the news reports during those 13 days in October of 1962 and the anticipation of missiles raining down on Miami. But most U.S.-born meeting and incentive professionals are much younger and only know Cuba from their parents talking about the Cuban missile crisis or watching Ricky Ricardo from “I Love Lucy,” a show that will live forever in the black hole that is TV reruns.

The Clock Is Ticking

One thing is certain, that tiny island 90 miles off the coast of Florida is about to undertake an unprecedented tourism boom. And like any explosion, there will be collateral damage, in this case the charm of an old-school world which may soon be washed away by a corporate tsunami. What this means for corporate meeting planners is that the clock is ticking. Now is the time right to experience something close to home but still off the beaten path.

Corporate meeting planners is that the clock is ticking. Now that the “Boogiebirds” have been diplomatically opened, streets filled with 1950s Fords and Chevys with big fins are sure to be replaced by top-of-the-line Toyota SUVs, and billboards with paintings of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara will soon be covered over by a 30-foot Tom Brady selling Uggs.

Marriott International is one of many companies eager to do business in Cuba, especially as more Americans travel to the island. “With travel to Cuba now surging, existing Cuban hotels are full and hotel companies from other countries are racing to tie up as many of the new hotels as they can before the likes of Marriott and our U.S. competitors show up,” President and CEO Arne Sorenson said in a U.S. News & World Report interview.

Current hotels may not have as many deluxe amenities as the first major airline to do so since restrictions were lifted. You also can book a hotel room or a car through sharing services such as Airbnb. But that doesn’t mean there isn’t still time to enjoy perfect beaches, traditional foods and the unblemished hospitality of its people.

Planners also will find that they won’t be annoyed by people chatting on their cell phones at the table next to them while dining out, or get run over by a teenager in the street with her head down and her thumbs doing the texting tango. It’s the fear isn’t Cuba turning into Las Vegas but becoming another Atlantis or Dubai, where commercialism has never been reeled in, and the words “bigger is better” might as well be the national motto. With all we know about Cuba, both past and present, and there are plenty of political warts — some Corporate Travel Management (CTM) companies may still have issues suggesting to their meeting planners and incentive clients that partaking of the old-world charm of Cuba, before it starts to vanish, is still a mystery about Cuba, so the time is right to experience something close to home but still off the beaten path.

Because it’s been closed so long, there’s still a mystery about Cuba, so the time is right to experience something close to home but still off the beaten path.”

“Because it’s been closed so long, there’s still a mystery about Cuba, so the time is right to experience something close to home but still off the beaten path.”

Franc Jeffrey

Franc Jeffrey is CEO of EO Travel, with offices in the United Kingdom and Boston, MA. He has over 25 years experience in global corporate travel. Jeffrey can be reached at fjjeffrey@eqtravel.com. For more info, visit www.eqtravel.com.

Editor’s Note: Go to www.commerce.gov for a Cuba sanctions fact sheet; and www.treasury.gov for FAQs.
Legal Issues

Shocking Disconnects

Top Experts Advise Planners to Give Far Greater Attention and Care to Legal Matters

By John Buchanan

Almost by definition, corporate meeting planners focus on elemental, day-in and day-out practical considerations such as destination and hotel selection, food and beverage choices that fit the budget, convenient airlift and impactful meeting content.

But there is another critically important factor that is often overlooked. And that is the sometimes complex legal issues involved in executing and hosting a meeting.

In today’s world, however, planners and meeting hosts who pay insufficient attention to those issues do so at their peril — and the peril of their organizations.

The Shocker: Sloppy Contracting

Written contracts with hotels are the foundation of every meeting and event. And over the last few years, host companies have exerted more influence on the contracting process by creating their own addendums to the traditional contract templates used by every major flag hotel company and many independent properties.

But it’s shocking to discover that there is often a critical disconnect in that process.

“The legal issue that I see every day is that the hotel sends out its contract, then the meeting client sends out what they call their addendum,” says Phoenix-based meeting industry attorney Lisa Sommer Devlin of the Devlin Law Firm, P.C. “And the addendum is 100 percent the opposite of the hotel contract. Then they slap those two documents together and that leads to disputes if anything goes wrong. It’s just really sloppy contracting. Instead of the two parties just throwing together two completely different documents, they should sit down and actually communicate and negotiate over key terms and which work for both sides.”

Sloppy contracting and a lack of clear communication and negotiation over key terms is common in today’s harried, go-go meeting industry, Devlin says, with meeting planners overburdened and the booking window for many meetings as short as it has ever been.

“In fact, it’s extremely common,” says Devlin, who often represents hotels. “And it’s bad business for both sides, because what happens is that companies come in and say, ‘You have to use our contract addendum or we won’t even talk to you.’ And that’s just lazy contracting that leads to problems down the road.”

Fundamental causes of the problem include the realities that meeting demand is approaching an all-time high, while many meetings are booked on short notice. As a result, both the hotel and the meeting planner overlook the obvious contradictions and flaws in the contract just to get it done expeditiously — while assuming nothing will go wrong.

“And the vast majority of the time, the assumption that nothing will go wrong is correct,” Devlin says. “But when something does go wrong, like a cancellation or attrition, and both parties look at the agreement, they realize they have one that is ambiguous or confusing or conflicting and they end up in a legal fight over it.”

John S. Foster, Esq., CHME, a partner at Atlanta-based Foster, Jensen & Gilley and another veteran meeting industry attorney, agrees that what Devlin calls sloppy contracting is indeed a serious industry issue.

“I use client addendums all the time,” says Foster, who typically represents corporate meeting hosts. “But the point is, you have to go to the original (hotel) contract and cross out what you disagree with and then reference the relevant provision of your addendum and say the addendum takes the place of the provision deleted from the hotel’s contract.”

As Foster sees it, the reason sloppy contracting happens is that “both parties tend to be lazy,” he says. “And one reason for that is that most corporate meetings are small compared to association meetings. And the company’s legal department doesn’t have time to mess with meeting contracts, so they just slap something together. It’s a time saver in the short run because people are in a hurry, but in the long run it ends up causing problems.”

The legal standard for how such a dispute must be resolved, Devlin says, is that “if there is an ambiguity in the contract, the judge or arbitrator has to try to figure out what the two parties intended their agreement to be and then attend to that intention. The problem is that if you have a hotel contract and a client addendum that were signed without real negotiation, there is no clear intention. There are two different interpretations of what the agreement was. And that’s not easy to resolve.”

And almost always, she says, when such a dispute happens, the legal costs to both the company and hotel are substantial, even if a compromise settlement is eventually reached before the case goes to court.

Devlin cites a related issue she finds almost incomprehensible in today’s technology-driven business world, where virtually anything
“Even if you have a firm contract for the meeting, that does not mean it cannot be canceled by the hotel if they get a better piece of business for those dates.”

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November 2015

Corporate & Incentive Travel

TheMeetingMagazines.com

John S. Foster, Esq.

CHME

Attorney

Foster, Jensen & Gulley

Atlanta, GA

and everything is just a mouse click away — contracts that include handwritten and initialed changes. I see that regularly and it’s shocking to me,” Devlin says. “And with computer technology and e-mails and Microsoft Word, there is no reason a contract with handwritten changes should ever be signed, because those are the kinds of changes that inevitably lead to disputes. And the reason is that they are often poorly written and too vague. Half the time you can’t even read exactly what they say. You can’t tell who initialed it. It just creates a cascade of issues. And there is no excuse for it.”

The solution to the broader issue? Devlin and Foster agree that the contracting process must be made much clearer and transparent than it is currently getting in many instances.

Or, in other words, let both buyer and seller beware.

Thanks, but No Thanks

Yet another important legal issue in the robust meeting market of 2015 is the fact that hotels are not shy about canceling a meeting already booked and often upon it in a fairly short time frame — if a better piece of business comes along on short notice. Such unilateral cancellations are often aimed at meetings booked back at the tail end of the recession, when planners were able to negotiate sweetheart deals with previously unheard of concessions.

Today, however, those sweetheart deals can rebounds to a planner and his or her event persona non grata.

The virtually unprecedented strength of the post-recession seller’s market means that hotels are canceling previously booked meetings to accommodate more profitable groups, even on sometimes disturbingly short notice, says Joshua Grimes, Esq., of Grimes Law Offices LLC, another highly regarded meeting industry attorney.

“If you have a firm contract for the meeting, that does not mean it cannot be canceled by the hotel if they get a better piece of business for those dates,” Grimes says.

And such a turn of events is not at all rare these days, he adds.

“Then the issue becomes whether the remedies for damages in the contract are sufficient to protect the group if the hotel indeed chooses to cancel the meeting,” he says.

For example, Grimes explains, “contracts typically have fairly extensive provisions for what happens if the group cancels. But if the hotel cancels, there is either no provision at all, or it says that the group is entitled to its ‘remedies under law.’ Period. And that basically means that the group has to prove all of its damages. But even if they do that, very few properties are going to just write you a check. They will go into negotiations with you.”

Therefore, Grimes recommends that meeting planners and hosts carefully examine their contracts to make sure there are clear and actionable provisions for legal and financial remedies if the hotel cancels the meeting. “You must make sure that the damages outlined in the contract are sufficient to cover your event if it’s canceled, meaning that all of your costs to relocate the meeting are broadly interpreted and fully covered,” he says. “And those costs can include the cost of a site visit to the new destination, the cost of reimbursing attendees who have already booked their flights or attorney’s fees for the negotiation of a settlement.”

One important practical detail, Grimes says, is that there is no cutoff date that is presently considered the legal standard for what point prior to its scheduled date a meeting can be canceled. And the closer to the date, the more damages potentially accrue to the meeting host.

And I believe that in some cases, the property may know about the issue coming up further in advance than the time they actually inform the original client,” Grimes says. “And the sooner the client knows, the more options they have to prepare for relocating the meeting than they will if the hotel cancels six weeks before the meeting.”

Devlin concurs that based simply on obviously market dynamics and economics, “more and more hotels are canceling what they consider bad business,” she says. “And that’s why I always stress the fact that both sides should be negotiating contracts that are fair to both sides. If a hotel thinks they’re getting an up meeting that is terrible for the hotel and they have another opportunity that’s better, then they might very well cancel the first meeting and pay the company off to get rid of them, and then still make more money by book- ing the more lucrative meeting for those dates.”

Foster adds that, “You can say it’s unethical for hotels to do that. But it’s not against the law. It’s just about dollars and cents. It’s a busi- ness decision.”

Can a meeting planner negotiate a “non-cancellation” clause?

That is a complex question legally, with no clear cut answer. “And even if you have such a ‘no cancellation’ clause, the hotel can still cancel,” Grimes says. “The legal question is what damages it will be liable for and have to actually pay.”

The only practical solution to the potential dilemma, Grimes says, is to negotiate contract terms that are so strict in terms of damages and liability to the hotel that their financial incentive for canceling are essentially negated. However, Devlin — who usually represents hotels — challenges that assertion. “Under the American system of law,” she says, “a penalty in a contract is invalid. You can’t penalize someone for breaching a contract or for not going forward with it. No court is going to enforce that.”

Her solution: While there is no way a planner can prevent a cancellation by the hotel, because monetary damages after the fact will remedy your situation, the remedy is often fairly simple. “If the meeting was booked at $100 a night for rooms and the rebilled meeting costs $125 per night, the original hotel will be liable for the difference,” she says. “But those are the only real damages that can be enforced in most cases.”

In addition, a major hotel brand that has must face the same dilemma may want to forego any “non-cancellation” clause and mitigate claimed damages simply by relocating the meeting to a sister property in the same destination. “And if the meeting planner says, ‘No, we’re not going to do that, we’re going to move to a more expensive hotel,’” Devlin says, “a judge is probably going to say, ‘You don’t get compensated for that, because you had an opportunity to minimize your losses.’”

The Force Majeure Dilemma

A third legal issue that has becoming increas- ingly significant since 9/11 — and especially since the outbreaks of the Ebola scare and SARS epidemic more than a decade ago — is the force majeure provison in contracts. Tyra Hilliard, Ph.D., JD, CMP, of Hilliard Assoc- iates in St. Simons Island, Georgia, is a speaker and multipreneur as well as a respected meeting industry attorney. Hilliard says that force ma- jeure clauses are currently a hot topic of interest and concern to both meeting planners and hotels. And history over the last 14 years, beginning with 9/11, has forever altered the perception of the importance of force majeure provisions.

“For example,” Hilliard says, “when the Ebola cases came to the U.S., interesting issues arose in Dallas and Cleveland, where people were afraid to come to those cities because there were Ebola cases. And I had meeting planners calling me to ask if they could invoke the force majeure clause in their contracts. Well, the fact is there were only a couple of cases, so there was no state of emergency declared in those cities by the World Health Organization or Centers for Disease Con- trol. So what that meant, in reality, is that people were just afraid. But fear does not constitute a force majeure issue.”

There was also a case in San Francisco, Hill- iard notes, where a company wanted to cancel a meeting years ago because hotel workers were on strike and the company refused to have attendees cross picket lines. As a result, they also tried to...
claim force majeure. “And again, the answer was no, that is not force majeure,” Hilliard says, “because the hotel would likely have a new contract with workers by the time the meeting happened.”

The point? Almost anything can be put in a contract if it is agreed to by both sides. But the provision must be clear. Therefore, if the company holding the San Francisco meeting had included in its force majeure clause its refusal to cross union picket lines in the event of a strike, it would have prevailed.

Foster note that there are three standards in the law that define force majeure. “And those are impossibility, commercial impracticability and frustration of purpose,” he says. “What the hotels want to do is eliminate the last two of those from the force majeure provision in their contracts. What they want to say is you can only terminate the contract — not cancel, but terminate, which means there can be no damages due either side — if it’s impossible to perform. And that’s a high bar. And there is also a lot of space between impossible and commercially impracticable. Impracticability means substantially and materially more difficult for one of the parties to perform due to unforeseen facts that are outside the control of the parties that occurs after the contract is signed.”

As an example, Foster cites the SARS epidemic and its headline generation in the spring of 2003. He had a client booked into Toronto for a major medical meeting that included use of the convention center. SARS hit the news two weeks before the meeting. As a result, many registered attendees canceled.

“So it wasn’t impossible for them to hold the meeting,” Foster says. “But it was impracticable because people said they were not going to show up.”

The CVB got together with booked hotels and sent the client a bill for $6.5 million as a cancellation fee. “The client had taken out cancellation insurance with a major insurance company, but the company denied the claim,” Foster says. Under threat of litigation, the company ultimately paid the claim, based on the premise that the SARS epidemic was unforeseen at the time the meeting contract was signed. But the hotels got paid.

And the insurance company changed its policy so that epidemics would no longer be included in event cancellation policies.

Foster’s best advice: A force majeure clause today should include a clear provision that covers “any threat to the safety, health or wellbeing of attendees. And I’ve been using that ever since the SARS incident in Toronto.”

Although sloppy contracting, sudden cancellations of meetings by the hotel, or the complexity and uncertainty of force majeure provisions are the three issues the attorneys agree are currently timely and important, there are many others. And new ones, such as risk to a company’s intellectual property or proprietary information presented at the meeting, or the risk implicit in relatively dangerous teambuilding activities, or the legal liability involved in alcohol-related incidents or even an attendee death from a food allergy — all issues noted by one or more of the attorneys — the message is to be aware of the breadth of legal risks and act accordingly.

“I think what’s most important is that the law, and contracts in particular, are about allocating risks,” Hilliard says. “So there is no perfect contract because neither party can totally eliminate their risks. That would mean shifting all of it to the other party, and neither one would ever sign a contract like that. That means the issue then becomes understanding the risks you’re facing and making an informed decision about how much risk you’re willing to take on.”

Tyra Hilliard, Ph.D., J.D., CMP
Speaker, Attorney
Multipreneur
St. Simons Island, GA

Unlimited outdoor opportunities. 13,000 sq. ft. of dramatic interior space. And exclusive access to two world-class amenities—the awe-inspiring Seven Canyons golf course and the award-winning Mi’a, a destination spa. If ever there was a meeting venue to reward your most valuable players, this is it.
To an outsider, corporate teambuilding activities may simply look like fun and games, but in reality, they can play a significant role in helping an organization reach important goals such as improving communications, fostering a better sense of cooperation or learning to overcome challenges. And the choice of teambuilding activities now available is as diverse as the organizations that engage in them.

Equine Insights

When Antoine Alston, owner of Berkshire Functional Fitness in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, was getting ready to launch an innovative new fitness concept, he wanted to find a teambuilding activity that would take his employees...
out of their comfort zone. Alston chose Berkshire HorseWorks, a nonprofit organization located in Richmond, Massachusetts, to guide his group of 14. Berkshire HorseWorks specializes in equine-assisted personal development programs designed to help employees learn how to work together toward a common goal and/or to adapt to a new management style.

Contrary to what some people may assume, the Berkshire HorseWorks program does not involve horseback riding. The goal of the program is to have participants learn about themselves and others by connecting with the horses and then observing and discussing the experience. All sessions are led by professionals trained and certified by the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA).

"Horses are innately intuitive," explains Hayley Sumner, founder and executive director of the program. "They give feedback in the moment. Because they are flight or fight prey animals, they’ll make a decision in a split second as to what they’re going to do in reaction to those around them." She says that horses can sense whether someone is being true to themselves.

"If there is an incongruity between what you’re saying and how you’re acting, they will call you out in a moment. You have to adjust your thinking and think out of the box. When the horse feels that there is a connection, and that the person has come to a place of acceptance and openness, the horse is more apt to work with them.”

One exercise that the facilitators at Berkshire HorseWorks conducted was to have each participant choose the horse that most liked them. "The alphabets of the group picked what they thought the alpha horse was, which was completely incorrect," Sumner explains. She says that the lesson taught here is that people should not make assumptions about others on their team, because those assumptions may turn out to be false.

In another exercise, the participants were asked to self-identify as to whether they’re natural leaders or less inclined to speak up. Next, an obstacle course was created to represent the challenges non-leaders typically had to navigate during the course of a work day. Then the tables were turned. The self-described leaders were blindfolded and had to follow the verbal directions of a non-leader in order to lead their horse through the obstacle course successfully. This exercise helped the non-leaders step up and feel what it was like to be a leader, and taught the leaders what it felt like to be vulnerable and have to rely on their teammates.

After each exercise, the group discussed what they learned from the experience. Sumner said that the leaders talked about how uncomfortable it was to feel vulnerable and that they had to be able to trust that they were safe with this person leading them. This led to a discussion about what the options are when a person feels vulnerable and whether there’s a way for them to spread out responsibility.

"It was a very unique approach to many things, from communications to teambuilding to cooperation to problem solving," Alston explains. "It was something different, and it still spoke to the things that I need in my company and the interpersonal relationships that we had to work on. I basically wanted people to forget some of the old-school thought processes and get them out of their (regular) environment.

"(The Berkshire HorseWorks program) was a nice way to do some icebreakers and work together on a situation that none of us really was familiar with, which is kind of what I’ve been asking them (to do in my business) anyway. Second, you have these big, beautiful horses, and these obstacles,” he adds, explaining that the members of his group did not have previous experience with horses. “I learned something different, and it still spoke to the things that I need in my company and the interpersonal relationships that we had to work on. I basically wanted people to forget some of the old-school thought processes and get them out of their (regular) environment.

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Since Alston was looking to his team to take his company into uncharted territory, the Berkshire HorseWorks program gave him a unique opportunity. "It gave me a really good assessment of who was being uncomfortable. When you're doing something that kind of goes against many other standards in the industry, you’re got to be ready for it and be strong in what you’re doing.”

Alston said that the full-day program definitely helped him achieve his goals.

"I learned a lot about my team, and my team learned a lot about me. We also had fun, which was actually very important because no one was in their comfortable place. It definitely disclosed some things I wasn’t prepared for, but it also disclosed many things I was extremely happy for.”

Western Adventures
When Sandra Ramirez, administrative assistant for the global trade compliance division of the electronic technology distributor Avnet in Phoenix, Arizona, needed to find a location for a teambuild-

Embracing Local Culture
In addition to helping groups achieve key goals, team-building activities also can help participants learn more about the culture of the destination in which they’re meeting. Here are a few examples:

Get creative with coffee. At the Costa Rica Marriott Hotel San Jose, groups can learn about coffee harvesting while taking a latte design class from the onsite coffee curator. The property is set on a 30-acre coffee plantation.

Reforest the rainforest. Los Suenos Marriott Costa Rica allows groups to participate in the reforest the resort project, which involves planting tropical almond trees, habitat for the macaw.

Build trust in the jungle. As part of its Mayan-inspired Xcalacoco Experience, the Sandos Caracol Eco Resort in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, offers a program called the Path of Senses. This unique experience pairs the group with nature by guiding them through the jungle while barefoot and blindfolded to increase sensory awareness and foster trust.

Savor the flavors of Puerto Rico. Groups at the Sheraton Puerto Rico Hotel & Casino in San Juan, Puerto Rico, can take part in a cookoff where they draw upon a variety of indigenous ingredients and spirits to see who can create the best dishes with local flair.

Crabbing and reef building. Wild Dunes Resort, a Destination Hotel, situated on a barrier island off the coast of South Carolina, offers a competitive crab-catching activity on nearby Capers Island, in which prizes are awarded for the largest male and female crab — later consumed in a campfire boil. In the SCORE Build a Reef program, participants assist in resorting and rebuilding an oyster reef with the South Carolina Oyster Restoration & Enhancement (SCORE) program. The two-hour event includes an overview about the low country’s ecosystem.

Spirited teambuilding. The Garden-to-Glass experience at the Bardessono Hotel & Spa in Napa Valley challenges participants to concoct original cocktails using locally sourced spirits and garnishes picked fresh from the onsite culinary garden. But before a bottoms-up takes place, the participant must also concoct an innovative name for the drink as well as a storyline that relates to the beverage.

— KB

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ing event for an international group of 10, she chose Fort McDowell Adventures. This unique venue located east of the Phoenix metro area offers multiple set-
tings for private events and allows groups to enjoy a variety of West Wild experi-
ences while taking in stunning mountain and desert views.
In addition to offering guided out-
doors adventures such as kayak-
ing, mountain biking, hiking and horseback riding, Fort McDowell Adventures of-
ers a number of options for teambuilding pro-
grams, including the Whip Crackin’ Chili Cook-Off and the Salsa-Margarita Chal-
lenge. It also offers the Moosching Along Cattle Drive, where the group receives ex-
pert instruction on how to move a herd of cattle
across the Sonoran Desert while learning the language of the open range. It lets city slick-
ers become cowboys for a day, while they also likely round up plenty of stories to take back home.
Pink Adventure Tours, a company well known for its tours of Sedona, the Grand Canyon and Las Vegas, recently estab-
lished its Scottsdale base at Fort McDowell Adventures. Up to 20 of the bright
pink vehicles will be available at all times to handle groups and special events.
Ramirez describes her event at Fort McDowell Adventures. “We arrived at 4:00 p.m. to an open bar with refreshing beverages and light snacks before taking a jeep tour. We then loaded up into two jeeps for a beautiful tour of the desert, seeing wild horses, various birds and even an eAGLE. As we completed the safari, there was a wonderful steak dinner cooking for us. We were able to enjoy our dinner while enjoying the beautiful sunset.
“Our team truly loved the event,” she continues. “Normally, when our international friends attend meet-
ings here in Phoenix, they don’t get a chance to enjoy what Arizona has to offer in scenic beauty. This event allowed our team to network and bond on a different level. It really gave our team a chance to unwind and enjoy the true beauty of Arizona.”

Sandra Ramirez
Administrative Asst. Avnet Phoenix, AZ

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Spicing Up the Event
Another Phoenix-area venue Sanctu-
ary Camelback Mountain Resort & Spa in Paradise Valley was the site of a team-
building activity planned by Lorena Cic-
ieri, executive assistant for Ask.com. The event was part of an executive leadership and strategy session.
“The objective of the meeting was to host the event in a relaxed location where executives would be able to brainstorm and collaborate on strategy for their respective business units,” she notes. “I was also looking for a property that could accommodate fun and engaging teambuild-
ing activities.”
Cicciari explained that they originally had planned to do an offsite teambuild-
ing event, but that rainy weather required a change in plans at the last minute. “The staff [at the Sanctuary] quickly made ar-
nangements for our activity to take place at the resort.” The teambuilding activity they organized was a salsa and margarita making competition. “Each team was giv-
en the ingredients and a certain amount of time to prepare their salsa and mar-
garita. Halfway through the competition, each team had to move to another team’s station. They then had to pick up where the other team left off. The activity was lots of fun and really forced each team to work together to finish the project. My attendees were very engaged in the activ-
ity…They all enjoyed the margarita and salsa making competition!”

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Making Creative Connections
The Hilton Hawaiian Village in Hono-
olulu offers a teambuilding activity that embraces an important part of the Ha-
awaian culture. “Groups are looking for more localized experiences,” explains Mike Murray, CMM, CMP, CASE, senior vice president and director of events at Waikiki Beach Activities, the exclusive pool and beach operator at the resort. “With canoeing being a big historic sport in Hawaii, Hilton Hawaiian Village offers canoe races for groups of up to 30 people. They are unique because they are led by licensed canoe captains (there are only eight licensed canoe captains on the island of Oahu) and it builds camar-

Meeting Objectives
Successful teambuilding involves establishing clear objectives, then finding an activity that can help the group meet them, like Alston did at Berkshire HorseWorks. “It was a really good bonding experience and it let people really get to know each other on different levels,” he sums up. “We were able to apply what we learned to what we were looking to accomplish (in the workplace).”

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Château Élan Winery & Resort offers a grape-stomping Grape Race teambuilding program and a glow-in-the-dark golf event.

Barrels of Fun
Château Élan also offers wine-in-
spired teambuilding activities such as the Grape Race where corporate groups stomp, strain and load grapes into bar-
rels. Then they race off to a wine tasting, stack corks to a prescribed measurement, then participate in a traditional Italian barrel race where the first team to roll their barrel across the finish line wins.

Greening the Experience
Planners also can put an eco-friendly spin on their teambuilding event when they hold it at The Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta. The hotel now offers Go Green Racing where groups are tasked with building one solar car and one car made only from recycled materials. Then the race is on to see which vehicle can outpace the other.

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The day after President and Chief Justice William Howard Taft passed away on March 9, 1930, editor of The Milwaukee Journal ran a piece on his frequent visits to Milwaukee. The article describes his reaction on the day that the word "I assassinate" was declared: “Sitting up in bed at 4 a.m. at the Hotel Pfister on November 11, 1918...the pajama-clad justice declared: “This is the greatest day in history.” The Pfister also hosted Taft in 1915 for a meeting with the local World War I armistice was declared: “Sit down and have every U.S. president since Truman.

The Waldorf Astoria has been the site of major political events and notable guests such as President George H.W. Bush (top) and Presidents Carter and Reagan at the 1980 Alfred E. Smith dinner in the Waldorf Ballroom. (interestingly, none of the six presidents depicted in bas relief on the hotel’s 1893 lobby clock have stayed in the Presidential Suite). Among the suite’s Georgian-style furnishings are an upholstered rocking chair that belonged to John F. Kennedy, wall sconces donated by Richard M. Nixon and a desk owned by General Douglas MacArthur.

A hotel’s background in catering to such dignitaries bodes well for the planner bringing in top-tier executives, who will surely experience the same level of service and decorum. Beth Waters, director of corporate customer experience, with Milwaukee-based Direct Supply, which services the senior living profession, notes that “We use the Pfister a lot because it’s a very sophisticated, professional environment that is at service that is so second nature to hotels that have welcomed presidential guests, their political history can serve to engage meeting attendees. Planners can stage galas themed after a famed political event, work with the staff to provide attendees private historical tours of the hotel, or at the very least, offer attendees mementos tied to the history. The Fairmont Olympic Hotel in Seattle, Washington, for example, produces the “Olympic: The Story of Seattle’s Landmark Hotel” in celebration of its 80th anniversary in 2004.

The Waldorf Astoria New York

George H.W. Bush was known to favor the cuisine at this iconic hotel, which made Waldorf Salad, Eggs Benedict and Red Velvet part of the national culinary tradition. And the resplendent Presidential Suite at the Waldorf has hosted presidential guests, their political history and made sure everyone had chips that are just amazing.

Beth Waters, Director of Corporate Customer Experience

Direct Supply, Milwaukee, WI

Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara

Classic West Coast hotels such as the 181-room Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara has been noted as a frequent lodging choice of Ronald Reagan and site of his press conferences. The Biltmore also has been a hub for corporate events, and regularly hosts meetings for the board of directors of Sage Publications Inc. Dana Graham, associate director, corporate events and communications relations, for the Thousand Oaks, California-based academic publisher, describes a “cultural synergy” between the Biltmore and her company. “Since this is our board of directors, it’s a very sophisticated group of people. They’re there for business purposes and they want to be in a really dignified, professional environment that is entrusted to service,” Graham explains. And the service at The Biltmore, like that of The Pfister, has that personal touch. “They know our attendees very well and treat us like a family,” she adds. “If we have a board member arrive ahead of schedule, they will do everything they can to get that board member into a guest room. If someone leaves something in their car, the valet staff is happy to run and get it. Or they’ll call you a cab if you happen to be stranded somewhere in Montecito,” she relates. “So when I am not on site for the meetings I have complete trust and faith in the staff there. They’re a fine-tuned operation, and if we have last-minute things that come up, such as adding a champagne toast if there’s a special occasion, they’ll be able to make

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Waldorf’s overall 60,000 sf of function space. Groups also may engage in the hotel’s Historic Tours, showcasing the landmark’s New York City legacy, including the famed Grand Ballroom and rooftop space with apianes and garden. "We use the Pfister a lot when we bring in VIP guests. ... We have historically put them at different hotels, and this year we made the decision to step it up a little bit and put them at the Pfister. It was extremely well received."
that happen flawlessly as if it had been planned for weeks." The hotel houses 15,000 sf of meeting space and offers its tropical gardens for Garden Games such as bocce. During Sage's 50th Anniversary Celebration at the resort earlier this year, "over 200 guests enjoyed "I have complete trust and faith in the staff there (Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara). They're a fine-tuned operation." Dana Graham, Associate Director, Corporate Events & Community Relations Sage Publications Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA at this oasis-like central California resort. Used as an Army training camp in the 1940s, today the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa is decidedly an idyllic environment for San Diego’s California Pacific International Exposition, a local newspaper reported: "The chief executive enjoyed an inspiring view of the broad Pacific, in the midst of mountains, oaks and a George C. Thomas-designed golf course that dates from 1923. Attendants can decompress at the 31,000-sf Spa Ojai, with its newly introduced Somadome Personal Meditation Pod. Other new features of the Ojai include the Indigo Pool & Bar, opened this summer, and the signature restaurant Olivella and Vine, opened in September. The AAA Five Diamond, 308-room resort offers 35,000 sf of function space.

Hotel Del Coronado

About seven miles from the San Diego Airport, planners can find one of California’s most visibly iconic resorts, the Victorian style Hotel Del Coronado, which has welcomed presidential guests such as Harrison, Taft and Roosevelt. The latter even flew the presidential flag at the Hotel Del, marking it his official temporary residence. When Roosevelt and his wife visited the hotel in 1935, 3,197, President Richard Nixon hosted a state dinner in the Hotel Del’s historic Crown Room for Mexican President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz. Former President and Mrs. Lyndon Johnson, and Governor and Mrs. Ronald Reagan, not to mention celebrities such as Frank Sinatra and John Wayne, were among the hundreds in attendance. Although dating from 1888, the Hotel Del is no mere relic; a recent $13 million, two-year renovation has revitalized the property, which features 679 guest rooms and 65,000 sf of indoor and outdoor meeting space.

The Westin St. Francis San Francisco on Union Square

Among historic California hotels, The Westin St. Francis San Francisco on Union Square has a claim to offering the most cutting-edge meeting technology with its Cisco TelePresence videoconferencing room, part of 56,000 sf of function space. The 1,195-room hotel has hosted events for dignitaries that would inspire confidence in any planner bringing in a high-profile group. Examples include a Barack Obama fundraiser, a celebration for Nancy Pelosi’s one-year anniversary as the first woman Speaker, the Third Annual Pros for Kids with first lady Bess and daughter Mary Margaret. The Hilton Chicago has hosted every president in its Grand Ballroom since the hotel opened in 1927. Inset: President Richard M. Nixon (1969–1974) at the then Conrad Hilton.

The Hay-Adams

Located in Washington, DC, The Hay-Adams is named after John Hay, who served as a personal secretary to President Abraham Lincoln and historian Henry Adams, the descendant of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams. Developer Harry Wardman bought the original pair of Romanesque homes designed in 1884 (an intellectual hub that welcomed figures such as Theodore Roosevelt and Mark Twain) and replaced them with The Hay-Adams House, an apartment-hotel that opened in 1928. Today the 145-room Hay-Adams makes a stately site for corporate meetings, surrounding groups with Elizabethan and Tudor architectural motifs. More than 10,000 sf of meeting space includes nine meeting rooms, a private dining room and the Top of the Hay, with panoramic views of the White House. Boasting

The Ojai Valley Inn & Spa, located in central California, has hosted Presidents Reagan, Ford and Carter.

The 145-room Hay-Adams makes a stately site for corporate meetings with incomparable views of Washington, DC. Some of the other major political figures to have lodged at the St. Francis include General Douglas MacArthur in 1951, President Eisenhower and Vice President Nixon in 1962, Japan’s Emperor Hirohito in 1975, Queen Elizabeth II in the Presidential Suite in 1983 (with the Reagans staying concurrently in the London Suite) and President Clinton in 1998.

Hilton Chicago

Opened in 1927, the Hilton Chicago has certainly lived up to its billing as “Midwest White House.” The 1,544-room hotel has hosted every U.S. president since its opening for a function in the pillar-less Grand Ballroom, while the two-story Conrad Suite has housed every president from Harry Truman to George W. Bush. President Obama himself has a long history with the hotel, having held eight press conferences in the Continental Ballroom during his election season, and appointed many members of his cabinet in that ballroom. Obama also held his first-ever cabinet meeting in the Waldorf Room. These rooms are part of an overall 234,000 sf of function space that, like the rest of the hotel, exudes historical character with elements such as French-crafted fixtures, Czechoslovakian crystal chandeliers and Fresco-style oil paintings. Next spring, the Hilton Chicago will unveil a property-wide renovation that aims to modernize while preserving historical integrity.

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Dana Graham, Associate Director, Corporate Events & Community Relations Sage Publications Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA

The office in the Presidential Suite at The Mayflower. Inset: President Harry S. Truman (1945–1953) arrives at The Mayflower with first lady Bess and daughter Mary Margaret.
Washington’s first air-conditioned dining room in 1930, the hotel drew many high-profile politicians, and its political pedigree continues in modern times: Obama and his family lodged at The Hay-Adams prior to his first-term inauguration.

The Mayflower Hotel
Dubbed “Washington’s Second Best Address” by President Truman, The Mayflower has been the site of numerous high-profile events in America’s political history, and some that were significant but not so high profile. Just four years after its 1925 debut, the property welcomed heads of state to a private room

The Room was later dubbed the Pan American room in 1957 for the Eisenhowers; and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover returned to the Pan American Room in 1972. The 657-room Mayflower offers 42,577 sf of meeting space and recently completed a $2 million renovation.

Eau Palm Beach
The Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa Commander in Chief suite is an opulent space with features that include dramatic ocean views, sprawling living space with a floating wall that can be drawn to create two private spaces, and an installation of miniature shoe sculptures. As envisioned by shoe designer Robert Tabor, an entire wall in the oceanfront suite serves as an exhibition space for miniature pairs of shoe sculptures dedicated to the first ladies and female dignitaries throughout history. Tabor’s Shoe Wall features designs modeled after Hillary Clinton, Barbara Bush, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Eva Perón, Imelda Marcos, Margaret Thatcher, Marie Antoinette, Princess Diana and Queen Elizabeth. President Obama has spent a night in the same presidential suite.

Crowne Plaza’s Top Resort in the 2015 Conde Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards, Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa recently debuted a new oceanfront restaurant and lounge, a celebrity-chef-led culinary program with fresh menus and exciting gastronomic events, a bespoke Cultural Concierge program and more. Situated on a secluded private beach on seven acres of the Atlantic coast with breathtaking ocean views and lush tropical gardens, the AAA Five Diamond Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa boasts more than 30,000 sf of meeting and event space.

The Omni Homestead Resort
Planners themselves, not only attendees, can become enthralled with the history of a hotel such as The Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, Virginia. The Allegheny Mountains resort opened in 1766 and has hosted Washington, Jefferson, Taft, Roosevelt, Reagan, Bush Senior and many other presidents. “As a history minor in college, it certainly peaked my interest that the property had such history,” says Courtney Richardson, executive assistant to the CEO of Honest Tea, Inc. “What a privilege to stay where such important figures had to know that certain rooms and halls had once heard conversation about the development of our country.” Richardson planned Bethesda, Maryland-based Honest Tea’s annual three-day company meeting at the Omni Homestead. “We wanted it to feel more like a retreat than an actual meeting, and no place seemed more fitting. The Omni Homestead Resort has certainly been able to maintain the historic charm. We have never held our company meeting offsite before, so being at such an amazing property was a treat all in itself. Our attendees took tours, read about the resort and were amazed at its history.”

The very father of America, George Washington, awarded Captain Thomas Bullitt the land grant that allowed the construction of the first Homestead property, an 18-room mountain lodge. In the course of hosting 23 U.S. presidents — from Thomas Jefferson to America’s roots. Honest Tea’s annual three-day meeting was held at the Omni Homestead. Inset: President William Howard Taft (1909–1913) and friends at the Homestead; son’s 1818 vacation to George W. Bush’s 2015 golf trip — the Omni Homestead has grown to 2,300 acres and 483 guest rooms. Today, planners have more than 72,000 sf of meeting space at their disposal, including the 13,485-sf Grand Ballroom and 10,368-sf Regency Ballroom. That’s a wealth of opportunity to convene in what is arguably the resort that is closest to America’s roots.

“We wanted it to feel more like a retreat than an actual meeting, and no place seemed more fitting. The Omni Homestead Resort has certainly been able to maintain the historic charm.”

Courtney Richardson, Executive Assistant to the CEO of Honest Tea Inc., Bethesda, MD

where they worked on continuing relations between North and South America. The room was later dubbed the Pan American Room. Eventually it became the Cabinet Room, where Reagan’s former aides and presidential library volunteers gathered in 2004 following his death to prepare and distribute the 1,000 funeral invitations. On March 3, 1933, Roosevelt stayed in guest room 776 on the eve of his inaugural address and wrote the famous line, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

The Mayflower’s culinary staff has a tradition of serving foreign and domestic dignitaries: Winston Churchill attended a state dinner there in 1945; King of Morocco, Mohammed V. hosted a dinner in 1957 for the Eisenhowers; and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover reportedly ate the same meal at The Carvery Restaurant (now Edgar Bar & Kitchen) nearly every working day for 20 years until his death in 1972. The 657-room Mayflower offers...
Destination

Colorado’s Topography, History and Spirit Offer Up a Powerful Experience

By Christine Loomis

Denver was built at the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, where the amber waves of the Great Plains crash into the base of the Rocky Mountains. Long a conduit between the two geographical areas, Denver is neither a city of the plains nor of the mountains. Its history derives from both, and its energy and spirit follow suit.

Denver is not lacking in historic hotels and venues that capture the long-ago essence of the city, but no lodging more completely connects Denver’s past to its contemporary sophistication than The Crawford Hotel, which opened July 2014 inside historic and meticulously renovated Denver Union Station. That made it appealing to Nicole Pribble, who planned the February senior leadership meeting for Nelnet Inc. About half of the 16 attendees came from headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska, the rest from the company’s south Denver location. As one attendee put it, “The Crawford maintained the history aspect of the hotel including historic photographs behind the check-in desk. This really gave a sense of preserving the history while incorporating a modern flair!”

In addition to being a new and uniquely Denver location — elements the group wanted — The Crawford stood out for service. “The staff was amazing,” Pribble says. “My first contact was with Michelle Baca, area senior sales manager. She was unbelievably nice, pleasant and answered all of my questions patiently. She walked me through the whole process from start to finish, including meeting-room requirements, parking and options for meals outside. The Crawford had a great energy from Union Station and gave the feel of being really connected to the city.”

Pribble was immediately on it even though she had other meetings and site tours going on. We also had a few rooming-list changes that were immediately accommodated, and I never felt like I was putting anyone out by asking. We also changed the start time to earlier than we had originally planned. Again, no problem whatsoever.

“The Crawford’s location within walking distance of many restaurants and bars was a plus. “Our group had dinner at Venice Ristorante, & Wine Bar across the street,” Pribble says. “It was amazing. The staff was very accommodating and reserved a perfect table overlooking the window for the whole group.”

Most meals and snacks came through the hotel and eateries in Union Station that service the hotel. “The items were very ‘local’, which is exactly what we were hoping for,” Pribble says. “The food consisted of items such as elk jalapeno cheddar brats, Colorado pork green chili and chicken spinach sausage for breakfast. We had the Mountain Standard menu option for lunch and the Horizon Continental Breakfast, which includes whole-grain oatmeal and delicious sweet breads.”

For Pribble and her colleagues, the only downside was not discovering The Crawford sooner. “If planners want a unique Colorado experience, this is ideal for that,” Pribble says. “The Crawford had a great energy from Union Station and gave the feel of being really connected to the city, yet was still comfortable and allowed the group to get a night’s sleep — something that doesn’t always happen at hotels!”

Perhaps no venue exemplifies the moniker Mile High City better than the Pinnacle Club — former home of the storied and private Petroleum Club — located on the 38th floor of the Grand Hyatt Denver. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, visitors to the Pinnacle Club can see from the mountains to the prairies for an estimated 7,500 square miles. The view from the club’s 17,000 sf of conference rooms and ballrooms is even more magnificent — spanning 10,600 square miles of snowcapped peaks and prairie, taking in 200 named mountains, including Pikes Peak more than 100 miles away. The Pinnacle Club, which can accommodate 650-700 attendees, is currently under consideration by The Guinness Book of World Records for designation as the greatest view event facility in North America.

In September, the Grand Hyatt Denver completed a makeover of its two largest ballrooms, accompanying foyers and 11 breakout rooms as part of an estimated $5.4 million redesign of the hotel’s 30,000 sf of meeting space. The update follows a $28 million renovation of guest rooms and public spaces. Sister property Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center, which redesigned all 105,000 sf of guest rooms in 2012, completed its huge 7,500 square feet of renovated meeting space in 2013.

“The Crawford had a great energy from Union Station and gave the feel of being really connected to the city.”

Nicole Pribble, Technical Assistant
Nelnet Inc., Highlands Ranch, CO

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THE MEETING MAGAZINES, INC. 2015
Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs history is rooted in the Gold Rush of 1858 and in the great age of railroads — seven met here in the 1860s. As a center of patriotic spirit, Colorado Springs is hard to beat. Katherine Lee Bates was inspired to pen “America the Beautiful” after standing at the top of Pikes Peak. Today, the city is the location of the U.S. Olympic Training Center and of the U.S. Air Force Academy and NORAD (the North American Aerospace Defense Command), which provide another kind of patriotic sense of place, either for their location or well-preserved history, including Cheyenne Mountain Resort, The Broadmoor, The Cliff House at Pikes Peak in neighboring Manitou Springs and The Mining Exchange, a Wyndham Grand Hotel, located downtown. For exclusive VIP and executive retreats, The Broadmoor offers offsite wilderness experiences for small groups at its Ranch at Emerald Valley; Cloud Camp; The Broadmoor Fishing Camp; and The Garden of the Gods with its soaring red-rock formations and archaeological evidence dating to 1330 BC.

Colorado Springs offers a range of lodging and dining experiences and activities, as well as attributes that first-timers to the resort might not expect, such as the Freestanding Keystone Conference Center with 60,000 sf of meeting, exhibit and event space. Across the resort is another 40,000 sf. Keystone accommodates groups up to 2,000, with three ballrooms providing reception space for 400–2,066 and theater-style setup for 400–2,250. As for activities, CBST Adventures offers teambuilding experiences such as orienteering, bike challenges, winter Olympics experiences and more. Keystone’s two stellar golf courses offer the best in mountain play, including group tournaments. A high-light of any meeting here may well be the dining, especially at Alpenglow Stube, highest AAA Four Diamond restaurant in North America, accessed via two gondolas.

Aspen

Aspen

Aspen Historic home to globally recognized leadership conferences and tucked into one of Colorado’s most dramatic settings, As-pen capitalizes brilliantly on its combo of rugged nature and extraordinary luxury.

In March, 35 incentive qualifiers from Health-Mor Inc.’s FilterQueen Thousand Council Program met at St. Regis Aspen Resort. For Andy Bountogianis, in charge of worldwide sales promotions for Health-Mor headquarters, high expectations were definitely met.

“Overall, we enjoyed our time in Aspen. The city has a lot to offer and we enjoyed the variety of things we did. The St. Regis Aspen Resort was a beautiful hotel and the service was excellent,” Bountogianis says.

Beaver Creek

Beaver Creek is intimate and secluded with excellent skiing, fine dining and dramatic settings galore — with all that Vail famously offers just 10 miles away. Although founded only in 1981 as a ski resort, pioneers settled in the valley a century earlier. Frank Bienkowski, aka Beano, arrived in 1919. His homestead on the mountain is still visible and inspired what may be Beaver Creek’s most notable dining and event venue, Beano’s Cabin; available for up to 150 attendees. Groups of up to 98 can also book All-Alpine ski space for the wife of one of the first settlers in the area.

The resort accommodates groups up to 500 across small lodges, condo units and the 167-room Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort, which features more than 20,000 sf of flexible indoor/outdoor space. Nearby, The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch offers 180 guest rooms and 26,000-plus sf of indoor/outdoor space. A bonus for planners is that the Beaver Creek community works together to manage village-wide meetings. Groups of up to 500 might have a general session at the Park Hyatt or Vilar Performing Arts Center with 60,000 sf of meeting, exhibit and event space.

Breakenridge

Breakenridge has 100,000 sf of meeting space, 40,000 of it at Beaver Run Resort & Conference Center, and can accommodate groups up to 1,000. Like other mountain resorts, it offers a ton of activities, dozens of restaurants and diverse accommodations, from resorts and lodges to spectacular private homes. Breckenridge was founded in 1859 to accommodate miners flocking to the area, and its colorful boom-and-bust history is part of the town’s ambience. Breckenridge is the only municipality in the world to own a 27-hole Jack Nick-laus-designed golf course, and it’s one of the highest towns in Colorado at a lofty 9,600 feet above sea level.

Breck’s reputation as a center of craft brewing makes it a draw for attendees who can hop on free in-town transportation to access stellar local breweries. Multiple festiv-als throughout the year, including an international snow sculpture championship, pro cycling champi-onship and Oktoberfest, pro-vide an energetic backdrop — and affordable entertainment — for groups in every season.

Keystone

Keystone’s location 80 miles from Denver International Airport means attendees can be on the slopes, in meeting rooms or gathering for a function in under two hours via scene-tric drive. A ski resort since 1970, Keystone retains evidence of its mining and ranch history, including historic buildings integrated into Keystone Ranch Golf Course.

Amenities include a range of lodging and dining experiences and activities, as well as attributes that first-timers to the resort might not expect, such as the Freestanding Keystone Conference Center with 60,000 sf of meeting, exhibit and event space. Across the resort is another 40,000 sf. Keystone accommodates groups up to 2,000, with three ballrooms providing reception space for 400–2,066 and theater-style setup for 400–2,250. As for activities, CBST Adventures offers teambuilding experiences such as orienteering, bike challenges, winter Olympics and road races, and Keystone’s two stellar golf courses offer the best in mountain play, including group tournaments. A high-light of any meeting here may well be the dining, especially at Alpenglow Stube, highest AAA Four Diamond restaurant in North America, accessed via two gondolas.

Steamboat Springs

Steamboat Springs’ ranching heritage is matched only by its Olympics heritage — it’s been hometown to more Olympians than any other U.S. town. Both aspects are celebrated, giving groups an only-in-Steamboat experience. Together, The Steamboat Grand and Sheraton Steamboat Resort (which saw $24 million in upgrades last year) offer

I truly enjoyed everything in Aspen and the St. Regis had to offer. Our group had a memorable experience and we would surely go back.

Andy Bountogianis, Worldwide Sales Promotions, Strongsville, OH

In some ways, Aspen was a surprise. “I had never been to Aspen prior to my site visit,” Bountogianis says, “but I can tell you that I truly enjoyed everything Aspen and the St. Regis had to offer. Our group had a memorable experience and we would surely go back.”

The Overlook event space at The Broadmoor’s Cloud Camp.

Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort.

THE MOUNTAINS

Each of Colorado’s resort mountain towns has a distinct person-ality, history and contemporary presence. Some have roots in mining, others in ranching. All offer a full menu of invigo-rating outdoor activities, not the least of which is exceptional skiing. Culture, too, is embedded in the mountain experience.

Incentive qualifiers from Health-Mor Inc.’s FilterQueen Thousand Council Program took to the slopes in Aspen.
The Lodge at Vail, a RockResort.

Credit: The Lodge at Vail

Amy Dowell, V.P. Groups, Meetings and Events
ARTA Travel, Plano, TX

"People and service go hand in hand and Lodge (at Vail) staff members genuinely care about making the client happy. ‘No’ was not in their vocabulary."

Getting everyone on the slopes, of course, is crucial on a ski-resort trip and Dowell says Vail made it easy. "Lift tickets were arranged through the hotel and rentals were super easy; the group came to our welcome dinner, fitted everyone and delivered all the equipment by the time our participants were ready to ski the next day."

Other activities included spa time, a snowmobile tour with Sage Outdoors that Dowell calls fabulous, "and the hotel helped me put together a private beer tasting/cheese-making class, which was really cool," she adds.

One of the best aspects of the meeting for Dowell was working through the hotel for everything. "I didn’t have to go through multiple vendors," she says. "I had a lengthy and detailed conversation with my conference manager, who helped to complete my activity ideas and went above and beyond by contacting vendors to put it all together. She simplified my job and at the same time helped maintain the unique elements specific to this group. It was a fantastic experience and I look forward to working with the Lodge at Vail again and again."

Whether planners choose the cities or mountains, it’s impossible to go wrong.

Catering stood out as well, according to Dowell, who typically doesn’t rely on standard banquet menus. "I like to use our budget and ask the chef to be creative and come up with a specialized menu for our functions," she says. "We had unique menus and the staff offered flexibility in working with our budget and strict dietary needs."

Steamboat is the epitome of the work-hard, play-hard ethic, perfect for mixing meeting time with adventure, from hiking, biking, rafting and hot air ballooning in summer to ice climbing, dogsledding, night skiing and Olympic-led ski clinics in winter. When it’s time to kick back, the weekly summer pro rodeo draws crowds, but there are also several ranches where attendees get a hands-on feel for the lifestyle that helped shape the West.

Steamboat, which has more than 100 restaurants and bars — 21 new in the past year — where attendees can gather together or on their own. Steamboat also checked out Vail’s highly regarded restaurant scene, including La Tour and Mountain Standard, which Dowell calls easy to work with. Direct flights into both Denver International and Eagle-Vail airports gave the group flexibility. Dowell worked with Colorado Mountain Express to transport attendees from airport to resort. "They are great to work with and offer fair pricing," she says.

The Lodge at Vail, a RockResort.

Credit: The Lodge at Vail
The Pursuit of Excellence

The relentless pursuit of excellence takes on special significance in the current sellers’ market. While others may be content to rest on their laurels, those industry leading-winners prove every day what means to be best in class by continually reinventing themselves through reevaluations, renovations and rebrandings. But it is the intangibles that really set the winners apart. After all, ours is a people business, and too often that personal touch gets lost in this digital world. Communicating and marketing effectively is all about making real connections through relationship-building. When you make it personal, you make meetings and events an unqualified success. And then everyone is a winner. That’s why our Awards of Excellence come full circle, right back to the meeting professionals who cast their ballots.

We salute all the winners of our Awards of Excellence on these pages and invite you to read the success stories of many of the winners featured in this 31st annual section.

[Signature]
Miami is the place for your event if you want your attendees to love their experience and rave about it back home. Miami has the best weather, the hottest restaurants, the hippest shops, the most accommodating hotels and the most beautiful people anywhere in the world. Everywhere you turn there’s something to explore — a colorful burst of rare and exotic orchids, a brightly colored macaw, a brand new Spanish restaurant, a thought-provoking art exhibit. Miami is home to amazing attractions, pristine beaches, top restaurants, exciting nightlife, world-class arts and cultural venues, historic and heritage neighborhoods, and much more. Miami is a cultural hub, the only city in America with two sparkling new performing arts centers — Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts and the new Pérez Art Museum Miami.

Meeting Facilities

Greater Miami has three convention centers — the Miami Convention Center, the Miami Airport Convention Center and the under-renovation Miami Beach Convention Center — totaling nearly 1 million sf. There also are nearly 75 specialized meeting venues — many stunningly unique. Sports stadiums, art galleries, attractions, museums, nightclubs, private clubs and theaters create memorable environments for receptions, breakout sessions and other events.

The Miami Beach Convention Center is being reimagined as a state-of-the-art, LEED-certified facility with more than 500,000 sf of exhibit space, a 60,000-sf multipurpose ballroom and 81 new breakout rooms with more than 190,000 sf of space. The center is open for business and will remain open throughout the entire process, which is set for completion in 2018. The proposed 800-room headquarters hotel will open in January 2019, and the new Marriott Marquis Miami Worldcenter project in downtown Miami will be starting soon with a planned 1,800-room hotel and 100,000 sf of exhibit space. So if you’re looking for exciting new venues, we’re the only city you should be considering.

Getting Around Is Easy

A renewed Miami International Airport lands you in the midst of all the action. A new Miami Intermodal Center whisks you on your way. Attendees can touch down, check in and be lounging on the beach in less than an hour. Imagine the meeting your attendees will want to come to. It’s so Miami.
Atlantic City means business especially since Meet AC arrived on the scene. Created to expand the meeting and convention business in this iconic city on New Jersey’s famous shoreline, Meet AC is at the ready to introduce planners to Atlantic City, which is being refreshed and redeveloped from The Boardwalk to Gardiner’s Basin, from the world-famous Steel Pier to the new Playground and everywhere in between.

Meeting Facilities and Accommodations
The Atlantic City Convention Center provides 486,600 contiguous sf of exhibit space, 45 meeting rooms, ample prefunction space, free Wi-Fi, an onsite audio-visual provider, a business center, and exceptional food service from snack bars to banquets. Built in 1929, Boardwalk Hall — home to the Miss America Pageant — is the first convention center. Harrah’s new-build Waterfront Conference Center, connected to Harrah’s Resort Atlantic City, can accommodate up to 5,000 attendees among its 100,000 sf of space. Resorts Casino Hotel opened a new conference center this summer, and the Tropicana completed a $50 million renovation. The newest outdoor entertainment venue is Borgata Festival Park, which features a 4,000-person concert space.

Atlantic City boasts more than 15,630 first-class hotel rooms citywide that provide perfect accommodations for the comfort and relaxation of all your attendees. The city’s eight casino hotels and multiple non-casino hotels boast world-class resort amenities, significant meeting and banquet facilities and an abundance of unique event venues.

Fun and Excitement
The Entertainment Capital of the Jersey Shore offers round-the-clock fun and excitement year-round, day and night. Top-name comedians, concerts and shows will have your attendees laughing and singing all night long, and plentiful dining options — including brand-name eateries and celebrity chefs — will satisfy your attendees’ taste buds. Jimmy Buffett’s Margaritaville entertainment complex at Resorts Casino Hotel is one of the newest hot spots, the Steel Pier soon will sport a 200-foot-high observation wheel, and the huge, new entertainment venue, The Playground, also is taking shape.

Meeting-goers can take a stroll on the famous, historic Boardwalk, bask in the glowing sun on the expansive beach or take a refreshing dip in the Atlantic Ocean. Shopaholics can shop until they drop at high-end casino boutiques and at Tanger Outlets – The Walk with more than 100 tax-free, retail stores. Atlantic City is conveniently located, and easy to get to by car, train or air. The Meet AC staff is happy to help meeting planners locate the right space, assist with attendance building and housing, provide temporary staff and help coordinate all the details for a memorable Meet AC experience.

Citywide Facts and Features

- Guest Rooms: 15,630
- Hotels/Resorts: 15
- Meeting Space: 1,376,483 sf
- Convention Center FYI: The Atlantic City Convention Center is committed to preserving its unique seaside environment while providing a safe, healthful atmosphere for our guests. “Going Green” has consistently been one of the center’s main operating objectives.
MEET PUERTO RICO

With more than 1.3 million sf of meeting space and more than 15,000 guest rooms throughout the island, the Caribbean’s largest and most technically advanced convention center, an increasing range of accommodation options, and a growing list of awards and accolades, Puerto Rico continues to offer meeting planners a wide variety of meeting and event options. Every type of meeting from citywides to luxury CEO board retreats are accommodated all the while ensuring a distinctive and memorable experience on a beautiful tropical island. And no passport is required!

Group attendees can enjoy a wide range of activities from a culturally rich walking tour through 500 years of history on Old San Juan’s cobblestone streets to hiking in El Yunque, the only subtropical rainforest in the region or kayaking in three of the world’s five bioluminescent bays. Puerto Rico also provides a wide variety of enriching CSR programs.

A fun and unusual way to experience the rich culinary side of Puerto Rico is by experiencing chinchorros. This unique experience is similar to bar-hopping, where groups travel to many local rustic hangout spots where the drinks and food are strong and cheap. Chinchorro is a great way to enjoy a day trip around the Island, meeting the locals, great food, drinking and having a blast!

Major Renovations

Several hotels and other tourism entities have completed or are under major renovations, including a $29.7 million Hyatt Place San Juan to be located in the Puerto Rico Convention District, expected to open in the first quarter of 2016. The Embassy Suites Dorado del Mar Beach Resort, located about 25 miles west from San Juan and the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, recently completed the second phase of a multimillion-dollar renovation, including a full overhaul of all suites and the introduction of the new Grand Hall, for a total of more than 22,000 sf of meeting space.

The Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, managed by Aerostar Airport Holdings, has completed $750 million in improvements over the last two years with plans to invest another $200 million in the future. There are about 2,000 flights per week servicing Puerto Rico.

Plans to link the Puerto Rico Convention Center district to Old San Juan are underway. The Paseo Puerta de Tierra project is a $29 million investment in a boardwalk linking historic Old San Juan with other popular tourism areas nearby that would give pedestrians and cyclists safer and easier access to the Convention Center District.

Meet Puerto Rico is committed to ensuring that the meeting experience escapes the conventional. Their professional and proactive team guides planners in creating top-notch meetings, arranging every detail from beginning to end and delivering an event that makes a lasting impression that attendees will remember.
Imagine meeting in a city where cultures collide in a brilliant explosion of flavors, emotions and sounds. New Orleans is the birthplace of jazz, home to Creole cuisine and a place rich with history and culture.

**New Developments & Improvements**

As New Orleans approaches its tricentennial in 2018, the city is bustling with new developments and improvements.

From the expanding BioMedical District to the historic French Quarter, New Orleans is one of America’s most walkable cities boasting more than 22,000 hotel rooms within a two-mile radius of the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (MCCNO). Take advantage of the 1.1 million+ sf of contiguous exhibit space at MCCNO or host your event in one of New Orleans’ one-of-a-kind venues such as Blaine Kern’s Mardi Gras World or The National World War II Museum, which is nearing completion of a $320 million expansion.

The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center has embarked on a major redevelopment of 47 acres of property upriver from the center. The Convention Center District Development Project will feature a linear park, headquarters hotel, music venue and much more.

Louis Armstrong International Airport continues to add new direct flights as it expands to add a new world-class terminal on the north side of the existing airport. The $826 million project is slated for completion by the city’s tricentennial celebrations in 2018.

**A Feast for the Senses**

After an engaging day of sessions, networking and education, take to the streets and immerse yourself in all of the sights, sounds and flavors that make New Orleans a one-of-a-kind city. Find out for yourself why New Orleans has been ranked as the top U.S. destination for business travelers and among the friendliest cities in the country.

Take a haunted history tour, enjoy one of more than 140 festivals throughout the year or head out to the swamp for an alligator encounter. Step outside the French Quarter and Follow Your NOLA through the up-and-coming Bywater, Faubourg Marigny and Uptown neighborhoods. And don’t miss out on the 1,400 restaurants throughout the city.

**Citywide Facts and Features**

- **Guest Rooms:** 24,185
- **Hotels/Resorts:** 124
- **Meeting Space:** 4 million+ sf (including MCCNO)
- **Special Services & Amenities:** The Convention Center District Development Project will revitalize 47 acres and feature a new linear park, headquarters hotel, venue space and much more.

In New Orleans, you will always find a little lagniappe — something extra — to go alongside your meeting. Whether there’s a brass band welcoming your guests in the airport or a second line out of your closing session, meet in New Orleans and “laissez les bon temps rouler” — let the good times roll! Your attendees will thank you.

**Contact us today to get started.**

www.neworleanscvb.com

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**Citywide Facts and Features**

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- **Meeting Space:** 4 million+ sf (including MCCNO)

**Special Services & Amenities:** The Convention Center District Development Project will revitalize 47 acres and feature a new linear park, headquarters hotel, venue space and much more.
With access to world-class technology, award-winning wineries and pristine natural beauty, attendees will fall in love with San Jose's trendsetting ways. San Jose cultivates an inspiring atmosphere that breeds innovative ideas — the ideal environment for meetings. Meeting planners can choose from one of seven Team San Jose-managed venues and cultural facilities including the San Jose McEnery Convention Center and four historic theaters that offer a combined 550,000 sf of meeting space. Hotel rooms are always close with 2,200 committable rooms on peak within downtown and a total of 8,000 guest rooms available citywide.

After the convention, attendees can maximize free time with a visit to any of downtown's 250+ dining and lively nightlife options in Japantown San Jose, Little Italy and San Pedro Square. Stroll along an eclectic strip of museums and galleries in SoFA District, get hands-on with the valley’s latest technology at the Tech Museum of Innovation, and experience vibrant entertainment throughout the city — all within walking distance from the convention center.

Three Reasons to Meet In San Jose

1. Wicked Smart and Wickedly Fast — Upon arrival to San Jose, attendees are imbued by the contagious energy of innovators, thinkers and dreamers acting as the driving force behind America's smartest city. The capital of Silicon Valley is home to 6,600 technology companies and has helped San Jose forge an unrivaled culture as the epicenter of innovation. Maximize your connectivity capabilities with Wickedly Fast Free Wi-Fi at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center, Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC) and within downtown San Jose.

2. Bright Ideas Beyond the Breakouts — Great ideas come in unexpected places, and San Jose’s revitalized downtown offers a wealth of stimulating attractions and social settings to charge the conversation beyond the breakout session. With a vast selection of alfresco restaurants and cultural spaces, downtown’s atmosphere cultivates innovative thinking.

3. Sustainably Savvy San Jose — San Jose’s visitor industry is putting its best carbon footprint forward with sustainable contributions from the convention center, airport (SJC) and downtown hotel properties. San Jose is an environmentally progressive city, and Team San Jose-managed facilities recycle, reuse and repurpose 89 percent of all material waste.

San Jose Does It All

Don’t forget — rather than handing planners off to other organizations once the meeting is booked — San Jose does it all, from housing, convention center and facility event services to customized food and beverage menus, permits, marketing support and special events.

MARK MCMINN
Director of Sales and Destination Services

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San Jose, California 95113
408-792-4521 • FAX: 408-792-3535
mmcminn@sanjose.org • www.SanJose.org

Citywide Facts and Features

- Guest Rooms: 8,000
- Hotels/Resorts: 53
- Meeting Space: 550,000 sf
- Special Services & Amenities: Benefit from Team San Jose’s pioneering one-stop service, a testament to 98 percent of meeting planners wanting to return.

C&IT

The Best Is HERE

Everyone wants to be the next Silicon Valley, but no one can replace the original. As the Capital of Silicon Valley, San Jose now offers Wickedly Fast Free Wi-Fi beginning at the Mineta San Jose International Airport, within Downtown and throughout the Convention Center with technology born HERE. Purpose built for speed and powered by multi-gigabit internet connectivity, designed to support multiple devices per attendee allowing thousands of attendees to stream simultaneously without interruption. Get your group’s Geek on with the nation’s best FREE Wi-Fi experience and no fine print. Really. It’s HERE.

Meet HERE. San Jose, California
sanjose.org
800.SAN.JOSE

Citywide Facts and Features

- Guest Rooms: 8,000
- Hotels/Resorts: 53
- Meeting Space: 550,000 sf
- Special Services & Amenities: Benefit from Team San Jose’s pioneering one-stop service, a testament to 98 percent of meeting planners wanting to return.

C&IT
Welcome to Denver, where 300 days of sunshine, a thriving cultural scene, diverse neighborhoods and urban adventure combine for the world’s best meeting destination. A vibrant outdoor city at the base of the Colorado Rocky Mountains, Denver’s stunning architecture, award-winning dining and unparalleled views are all within walking distance from the 16th Street pedestrian mall. When it comes to meeting planning, Denver has it all: a state-of-the-art convention center; a central location; an international airport; a walkable downtown packed with shopping, dining, nightlife and cultural attractions; thousands of hotel rooms; and a convention bureau that knows how to partner with you to create a successful event.

Accessibility & Affordability Update
Denver International Airport (DEN) has recently added major new international nonstops, including Reykjavík (Icelandair), Tokyo (United) and Mexico City (Volaris). On May 22, 2016 Lufthansa will launch new nonstop service between Denver and Munich, Germany. DEN offers 1,500 daily flights to more than 180 worldwide destinations. The new Airport Rail Line is scheduled to open on April 22, 2016, giving your attendees a speedy and affordable way to get from DEN to downtown Denver’s completely renovated Union Station. Fares to DEN have decreased by nearly 40 percent since 2000, the fifth steepest drop in the nation. Corporate Travel Index ranked Denver 20th among major cities’ total travel costs (lower is better!).

Green City
Denver was the first destination to receive ASTM/APEX Level One certification for sustainable meetings. The Colorado Convention Center also received the same certification for Venues, as well as LEED Gold certification. The Blue Bear Farm at the Colorado Convention Center grows 5,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables every year. Denver was named the No. 1 city for green meetings in the U.S. by GreenBiz.

Hotel & Dining Update
New downtown hotels include the 165-room ART Hotel, a 346-room HYATT House/Hyatt Place, the 230-room Marriott Renaissance, a 140-room Aloft, a 170-room 2 Block hotel (2016) and the 180-room Kimpton Hotel Indigo (2016), which will bring the downtown total to more than 10,000 rooms by 2017. In late 2015, a 519-room Westin is scheduled to open at Denver International Airport. Dozens of new chef-owned restaurants have opened featuring local and farm-to-fork cuisine as well as world-famous buffalo and lamb. Local rockstar chefs have been featured on everything from “Top Chef” to “Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives.” In Denver, there’s always a table for you.

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Citywide Facts and Features
Guest Rooms: 10,000+ downtown (2017), 44,000+ metrowide
Hotels/Resorts: 34 downtown/135 metrowide
Meeting Space: 584,000 sf at Colorado Convention Center
Convention Center FY1: The Colorado Convention Center has 584,000 sf of meeting space, two hotel-quality ballrooms and a 5,000-fixed-seat theater.
Whether networking with colleagues at 400 feet up in the air atop the new Orlando Eye or hosting a private company event in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter – Diagon Alley complete with a fire-breathing dragon, no other destination delivers excitement quite like Orlando. It’s no wonder it is the No. 1 meetings destination in the country.

Orlando’s strong appeal not only comes from its “wow” factor, but also from its sheer size with the second largest convention center in the country and 141 diverse meeting hotels to fit groups of all sizes.

**Exciting New Developments**

Meeting professionals love Orlando because it’s always changing and evolving. And now in its largest expansion in history, Orlando has exciting new developments across the area with luxurious new hotels, a growing foodie scene, and unique new venues and event experiences to “wow” your group – like the new dining and entertainment complex I-Drive 360 anchored by the Orlando Eye observation wheel towering 400 feet above the convention district. The spectacular new complex also offers 12 new restaurants plus the new Madame Tussauds Orlando and Sea Life Aquarium all available for private events. Down the road, also on International Drive is Mangos Tropical Café, opening this year. Mangos will bring the heat of South Beach to Orlando’s International Drive with its incredible professional dancers and singers offering live performances nightly. It also will have 55,000 sf of entertainment space for extraordinary private events.

Downtown Disney also has transformed into Disney Springs offering all new waterfront restaurants, live music, unique shopping and world-class entertainment. Upon its completion in 2016, Disney Springs will double the amount of shopping, restaurants and new entertainment experiences sure to impress your group.

As we look towards 2016, there are significant renovations and expansions going on at many of our meeting hotels to ensure an exceptional experience for meeting attendees, such as the $125M complete makeover to all 2,265 guest rooms of the world-renowned Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Resort.

New meeting space expansions are underway for 2016 at the Hilton Orlando, Loews Royal Pacific Resort, Wyndham Grand Bonnet Creek and DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld. Plus, Universal and Loews Hotels & Resorts will open the beautiful new 1,000-room Loews Sapphire Falls Resort with 131,000 sf of meeting space in summer 2016.

From incredible meeting spaces and award-winning tastes to unforgettable meeting experiences and unmatched hospitality, Orlando is the perfect fit for groups of all sizes. To learn more, visit the new www.OrlandoMeeting.com and sign up for our monthly What’s New Webinar. And if you submit your meeting RFP by December 31, you’ll be entered to win a new iPad mini. See why there’s more to meetings in Orlando.
The Broadmoor is the longest consecutive winner of the Forbes Five Star and AAA Five Diamond awards for excellence. The first convention held at The Broadmoor was in 1918 for the American Institute of Mining Engineers, just three months after the hotel’s grand opening. Since then, the “Grande Dame of the Rockies” continues to stand at the forefront of world-class facilities, amenities, and service, combining state-of-the-art comfort and convenience with an elegant and luxurious charm guests could only find in a classic international resort.

Situated at the gateway to the Colorado Rocky Mountains in Colorado Springs, the resort encompasses 5,000 acres, with rooms, suites and cottages; three championship golf courses; a Forbes Five Star spa, salon and fitness center; a nationally recognized tennis facility, staff and program; 26 retail boutiques; and 20 restaurants, cafes and lounges including Colorado’s only Forbes Five Star, AAA Five Diamond restaurant, Penrose Room.

Meeting Facilities

The Broadmoor offers 185,000 sf of meeting space, including the 60,000 sf Broadmoor Hall, the Colorado Hall with 15,000 sf of space, the International Center with 18,000 sf of space, and the potential of another 35,000 sf in a portable structure adjacent to Broadmoor Hall.

In total, meeting space on the property can accommodate upwards of 9,000 attendees. For groups needing a large venue with a variety of guest room offerings and pricing, The Broadmoor offers The “Broadmoor Connection,” a coalition of hotel partners all within five minutes of Broadmoor Hall that extend the number of sleeping rooms to more than 1,700.

Wilderness Experience

In addition, The Broadmoor’s growing “Wilderness Experience” properties offer exceptional options for planners of small meetings who are looking for places where big ideas can be developed in a setting only found in Colorado. Ideal for small corporate groups, The Ranch at Emerald Valley offers accommodations for 32. Cloud Camp offers accommodations for 56 guests with meeting space for up to 70. Perfect for executive retreats, The Broadmoor Fishing Camp offers world-class fishing on the Taryall River and hosts accommodations for 26. Seven Falls includes Restaurant 1858 and “The Broadmoor Soaring Adventure” and is available for private events. Having these locations within minutes of The Broadmoor offers an advantage unlike any other resort in the country.

The Broadmoor’s high level of service, attention to detail and unflagging commitment is to provide the best meeting experience in the industry. What becomes a legendary resort most is the ability to anticipate, meet and exceed needs. The flexibility and creativity afforded to planners through a wide variety of options and venues means more can be done to deliver quality experiences for attendees.

C&IT
THE HOUSTONIAN HOTEL, CLUB & SPA
Fourteen-Time Winner

The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa is a four-star property located on 18 acres of wooded landscape in Houston’s prestigious Galleria area. Its 289 nonsmoking guest rooms offer a residential feel with warm-toned fabrics and rich furnishings, lamps and artwork, nightly turndown service and relaxing wooded views. Each room features an oversized working desk area, personal in-room electronic safes, a Keurig coffeemaker, a mini bar refreshment center, environmentally conscious lighting and climate control features, complimentary weekday newspapers and umbrellas. Each is equipped with a 42-inch LCD high-definition television and LodgeNet Launch Pad, a secure and sturdy multimedia connectivity panel that allows guests to connect to a variety of portable devices. Complimentary wireless Internet access is available in all areas of the hotel. In an effort to conserve energy and provide special conveniences, The Houstonian has an energy management system for each room.

If preferred, guests can stay on the key-accessed Concierge Level at a premium price, and enjoy continental breakfast, early evening hors d’oeuvres and cocktails, after-dinner sweets and cordials, and concierge and business services.

Meeting Facilities
The hotel offers 24 meeting/event rooms totaling more than 33,000 sf of space that feature ergonomic chairs, drop-down screens and floor-to-ceiling windows for access to natural light, and an in-house audio-visual department to assist groups with their needs. In addition, the outdoor Meadow is available to groups for special events and activities.

Dining and More
The Houstonian features several unique dinner and event offerings onsite, including the Manor House, a historic home that serves as a private dinner venue for groups, and offers fine dining just steps from the hotel’s front door. Resort food and beverages can be enjoyed poolside at Arbor Grill or in Olivette, its award-winning restaurant. Other premium dining options are just minutes away, and the staff is happy to assist groups with securing arrangements and transportation.

Hotel guests receive complimentary access to the exclusive 175,000 sf Houstonian Club, which is ranked in the top five in the country by Fitness magazine. It offers state-of-the-art facilities and exercise equipment, including 250 machines, indoor and outdoor jogging tracks, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, a full-size indoor basketball court, three pools, personal trainers, registered dietitians, a rock wall, Pilates, martial arts, boxing and more.

Trellis the Spa offers 17,000 sf of pure bliss, with more than 100 treatments in 21 treatment rooms for facials, body treatments, massages, nail and hair services, professional makeup and more.

Facts and Features
Guest Rooms/Suites: 289/10
Meeting Space: 33,000 sf
Special Services & Amenities: Guests can enjoy the hotel’s Concierge Level, as well as access to the award-winning Houstonian Club and Trellis the Spa.

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Why plan a meeting when you can plan an escape?
Universal Orlando Resort is transforming the way meetings and events are held in Orlando. They are completing an unprecedented resort-wide expansion and remodeling of their onsite hotel properties. By 2016, they’ll have five spectacular onsite hotels featuring a combined 295,000 sf of meeting space. Plus, all five hotels are within walking distance of Universal Orlando’s theme parks and the CityWalk dining and entertainment complex. Meetings at Universal Orlando Resort were always unique. And now they’ll never be the same.

**LOBOS PORTOFINO BAY HOTEL**

**Sixteen-Time Winner**

Universal Orlando Resort is already Orlando’s most dynamic destination for meetings and events. And it’s about to become one of the biggest.

An expansion of the meeting space at Loews Royal Pacific Resort and the Summer 2016 addition of Loews Sapphire Falls Resort make Universal Orlando® the ideal destination for groups of any size. When complete, Universal Orlando will offer 295,000 square feet of flexible meeting space along with a total of 5,200 guest rooms resort-wide.

Your attendees can also experience an epic private event in two jaw-dropping theme parks or in Universal CityWalk® where you’ll find exciting nightlife and eight brand new dining venues. Plus, one-of-a-kind thrills await like The Wizarding World of Harry Potter™ – Hogsmeade™ and Diagon Alley™, TRANSFORMERS™: The Ride-3D, and The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man®.

Flexible meeting space. Exhilarating entertainment. Exceptional dining. Impeccable accommodations. If you can dream it, we can make it happen.

**Opening Summer 2016**

**LOEWS SAPPHIRE FALLS RESORT**

**FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.UOMEETINGSANDEVENTS.COM/CIT OR CALL 888-322-5531.**
Located on bustling Boston Harbor, the Seaport Hotel & World Trade Center offers an award-winning combination of luxury accommodations, distinctive meeting venues and function spaces with stunning harbor and city views and exceptional, award-winning service. Featuring more than 180,000 sf of flexible meeting space, including eight ballrooms, a 118,000 sf exhibit hall, and a high-tech, 400-fixed-seat amphitheater, meeting planners have a variety of flexible spaces to choose from. Elegant private dining rooms, a demonstration kitchen and outdoor gardens are also available.

Seaport’s seasoned staff of dedicated event and meeting planners is ready to assist with every meeting or event detail, working alongside to ensure a flawless experience, from the start of the planning process until the last guest has departed.

On-premise audio-visual assistance is available along with 24/7 telecommunications expertise, including an in-house team. Trade show equipment and event services are offered, along with onsite floral services for both individual orders and major events.

Accommodations
Seaport features 428 beautifully appointed guest rooms and luxurious suites, offering spectacular city and harbor views. Designed to meet the needs of the modern traveler, the guest rooms are designed so that visitors can work and relax with maximum flexibility. Complimentary wireless Internet access, flat-screen televisions, easy-to-reach bedside electrical sockets and USB ports and convenient reading lights are just a few of the many amenities that separate Seaport. Recognized by Fodor’s as one of North America’s five greenest hotels, Seaport invites guests to participate in its environmental initiatives, including through its in-room recycling program.

Guests can rejuvenate at Wave Health & Fitness, situated on the hotel’s plaza level. Wave features a sunlit indoor pool, a variety of fitness classes, steam rooms, massage and skin care services, and new Cybex cardio and strength equipment. Golf also is available nearby with preferred tee times for guests, and the hotel offers complimentary bicycles.

Dining
With a reputation for four-diamond, restaurant-quality cuisine, Seaport elevates your meeting with exceptional conference catering. Executive chef Richard Rayment’s custom-designed, seasonally inspired menus will bring special flair to breakfast, lunch, dinner and meeting breaks. With expert catering services, Seaport can enhance a simple board meeting for 12 or a red-carpet gala party for 5,000.

In addition to offering award-winning cuisine for meetings and banquets, Seaport also features the creative farm-to-table cuisine from Chef Robert Tobin in TAMO Bistro & Bar, and TAMO Terrace, a spectacular, seasonal outdoor space with harbor views.

More Rooms With a View Than Any Other Hotel in Boston.
Newly Renovated Guest Rooms Unveiled.

Harbor views, city views, garden views. The Seaport Hotel & World Trade Center in Boston has them all – and more of them than any other major hotel in Boston. With 8 ballrooms, 42 meeting rooms, outdoor gardens and terraces plus seven private dining rooms, Seaport has the space you need for your next meeting or event. And we’re the easiest hotel in Boston for access, minutes from Logan Airport and downtown Boston via our own MBTA Silver Line stop, water taxi and car. Call us to find out more at 617.385.4212.

Named by Fodor’s As One of North America’s Greenest Hotels  I  Complimentary WiFi  I  24-Hour Business Center
TROPICANA LAS VEGAS
A DOUBLETREE BY HILTON
First-Time Winner

Tropicana Las Vegas – a DoubleTree by Hilton is surprising meeting attendees after a $200 million complete transformation. With a unique South Beach vibe and a convenient location just minutes from the airport, major convention centers and top entertainment stadiums, the resort provides a luxurious, yet affordable experience on the Las Vegas Strip for meeting planners and attendees.

Accommodations
The resort’s 1,470 guest rooms and suites are residential-style accommodations that perfectly balance its relaxed vibe with high-tech amenities. From custom furnishings and premium features such as Serta Perfect Sleeper mattresses and luxury linens to enhanced in-room technology, everything needed for a productive, relaxing stay is provided. Rooms are also equipped with one of the fastest Wi-Fi services on the Strip, which makes catching up on work a pleasure.

Meetings and Events
After a recent expansion, the conference center offers more than 100,000 sf of flexible meeting space that is divisible into as many as 38 breakout rooms. The Trinidad Pavilion and Meeting Rooms provide 55,000 sf of exhibition space with ground-level access that is perfect for large general sessions, exhibits and other types of events. The Havana Room offers a distinctive setting for formal receptions with its magnificent crystal chandelier and custom banquette-seating areas. The Tropicana Theater is ideal for presentations and seminars, while networking events take on new life in the Beach Club surrounded by waterfalls, palm trees and cabanas.

Dining
When it comes to distinctive dining, Tropicana Las Vegas’ acclaimed restaurants will accommodate any palate. For authentic Italian cuisine, Bacio has been named Best Italian Restaurant and one of the Top 10 New Restaurants in Las Vegas. Biscayne is a top-rated steak house on the Strip, offering sizzling cuts, fresh seafood and an extensive wine list. Beach Café allows guests to enjoy creative cuisine inside or outside among the waterfalls and lush greenery of the pool.

Leisure
Tropicana Las Vegas’ outstanding leisure options set the stage for lively meeting breaks and teambuilding opportunities. Mingle with colleagues over cocktails in the lounge, stay energized between meetings with a cardio workout in the state-of-the-art fitness center or refresh with a soothing treatment at the spa. You also can gather your group on the casino floor for an exciting night out or enjoy group tickets to a performance of Raiding the Rock Vault, The New ILLUSIONS or Laugh Factory. Explore the possibilities with us at Tropicana Las Vegas – a DoubleTree by Hilton.

GAVIN MEALIFFE
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Facts and Features
Guest Rooms/Suites: 1,470
Meeting Spaces: 100,000 sf
Special Services & Amenities: Customizable catering, dedicated AV department, conference services registration desk, business center, convenient parking and Hilton HHonors members can earn/redeem HHonors Points.

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
Tucked away on 300 tropical acres in Aventura, Florida, Turnberry Isle Miami is a prestigious Mediterranean-style retreat with a culture of authenticity, spirited service and enriching experiences. Part of Marriott’s exclusive Autograph Collection Hotel portfolio, the resort is renowned for its two championship golf courses redesigned by Raymond Floyd, signature chef-driven restaurants, a four-star Spa & Fitness Center spanning three floors and 25,000 sf, the elite Cañas Tennis, two relaxing pools, 40,000 sf of meeting space, beach access on the Atlantic and engaging kids camps all within reach of 408 spacious guest rooms and suites.

The resort’s spacious, non-smoking guest rooms and suites provide the ultimate in luxury and comfort. For first-rate pampering, each spacious room has wood-floor entries, carpeted bedrooms, exquisite linens and the finest furnishings and art. In-room amenities include a flat-screen television, i-home, telephone, mini-bar, safe, coffee maker, iron and ironing board, wireless Internet access, Molton Brown bath and body products, hair dryer, two plush waffle cloth robes, slippers and more. All rooms feature French doors that open onto private terraces or balconies with spectacular views of the resort’s golf courses, gardens or pools.

Meeting Facilities
A storied tradition of impeccable hospitality, Turnberry Isle Miami is one of the premier meeting and convention destinations in the country. The resort’s centerpiece is a 40,000-sf Convention Center with several large ballrooms and 20 individual meeting spaces along with vast outdoor options. A full-service business center, state-of-the-art audio-visual company and award-winning cuisine prepared by a team of skilled chefs complete the onsite offerings.

Created by celebrity chef, author and personality Scott Conant is Turnberry Isle’s newest gastronomical experience, CORSAIR by Scott Conant, an Italian restaurant fusing Conant’s expert techniques with an emphasis on local and fresh set against the backdrop of the Miller golf course. A contemporary steak house located just off the main resort lobby, award-winning chef Michael Mina’s stunning 250-seat restaurant, Bourbon Steak Miami, features modern American fare with a focus on the finest meats and freshest seafood available worldwide.

In addition to Turnberry Isle Miami’s award-winning golf courses, it is home to a state-of-the-art Cañas Tennis center featuring four clay Hydro-Courts and Tennis Shop, a 7,500-sf Laguna Pool with an 180-foot long waterslide and casual eatery Cascata Grill, a 1,600-linear-foot lazy river, a scenic 2.9-mile jogging trail encircling the resort, an Optimal Wellness Center, a lobby lounge, a private club, exclusive car rentals available and complimentary shuttle transportation to neighboring Aventura Mall or recreation, and more.

Facts and Features
- Guest Rooms/Suites: 408
- Meeting Space: 40,000 sf
- Special Services & Amenities: 36 holes of championship golf, two signature restaurants, wellness spa and 24-hour fitness center, two pools, internationally renowned Cañas Tennis.

Book a Weekend Meeting and Let Your Attendees Discover a 300-Acre Tropical Oasis.

To book: (800) 661-S101 or rfp-tir@turnberryislemiami.com

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C&IT
An exceptional location, in spectacular surroundings, where excellence in service and creativity combine to deliver a world-class meeting destination. The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin was designed by world-renowned architect Michael Graves as a one-of-a-kind meeting facility where art and architecture combine to inspire creativity and collaboration.

Meetings and Accommodations
When it comes to the business of meetings, the award-winning team is highly regarded for their ability to exceed expectations. Successful meetings are created from environments and moments that blend to support content, resulting in greater ROI with your meeting objectives. It is in this meeting experience that the resort is truly distinctive by design. The award-winning banquet, catering and culinary team delivers customized solutions with a passion for each client. Nothing beats a private event in the parks to add that magical touch.

High among the many reasons to choose this resort are the exclusive benefits available to support your programming. The resort brings together resources to make planning both easy and memorable. From the Disney Institute learning and development opportunities to entertainment and production support from the Disney Event Group, the team is ready to raise the experience level at your next event.

The largest makeover in the history of the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel is one step closer to completion. The hotel has completed the redesign of every guest room in the 758-room Swan Hotel, and the first phase of the 1,509-room Dolphin redesign starts later this year.

The newly designed guest room features all-new upgraded furniture and all of the latest technology including large HDTVs. Additional power outlets provide more options for use of multiple personal electronics. A glass-topped desk on wheels provides guests with a flexible tabletop space for whatever the need. Blending an artistic combination of whites, blues and grays, the design creates a tasteful ambience. The centerpiece of the room is the famous Westin Heavenly Bed with its all-white custom-designed pillow-top mattress set, cozy down blanket, a trio of crisp sheets and goose-down comforter.

The resort is situated in the heart of the Walt Disney World Resort, within footsteps of Epcot, Disney’s Hollywood Studios and the shopping, restaurants and nightlife of Disney’s BoardWalk. Complimentary transportation is provided throughout the resort. Guests enjoy advance tee times to nearby Disney championship golf courses, Extra Magic Hours, and the FASTPASS+ access. Guests can enjoy one of the resort’s five pools, two health clubs, tennis courts and the Balinese-inspired Mandara Spa.

Recognized as a top foodie destination in Orlando, the resort offers 17 world-class restaurants and lounges, including the famed Todd English’s bluezoo, Il Mulino New York Trattoria, Shula’s Steak House and more.

Imagine your next meeting in a place where unforgettable surroundings inspire creativity
Newly designed guest rooms and state-of-the-art facilities provide the perfect backdrop for meetings from 15 to 15,000. With two decades of service expertise backed by award-winning accommodations and dining, this is the world you’ll experience at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort.

800.524.4939 • www.swandolphinmeetings.com
D ozens of questions come into focus in the days and months leading up to your conference.

• How comfortable are the rooms?
• Will the Wi-Fi work in every corner of the trade show floor?
• What’s the best restaurant to host a private dinner for key executives?
• Where should we plan an opening-night party attendees will still be talking about next year?

At Wynn Las Vegas and Encore, their award-winning team is driven with ensuring every question isn’t merely answered; more importantly, each question is anticipated, all with the goal of creating an event experience unlike any other you will encounter in Las Vegas. That’s why you will enjoy the services of a dedicated Convention Services Manager, Catering Manager and Meetings Concierge, each of whom will work with you personally to ensure the needs of your group — no matter how large or small — are handled with the expertise and finesse one has come to expect from these award-winning resorts.

Spectacular Environment
Perhaps what’s most special about Wynn and Encore is the idea that, even in the midst of your meetings, you’re never far from the feeling of being in the midst of a truly spectacular environment. Among the 260,000 sf of meeting and event space, you’ll find sophisticated spaces highlighted by floor-to-ceiling windows — some featuring open-air terraces — with pristine views of the rolling hills of the Tom Fazio-designed Wynn Golf Club or the sparkling waters of one of Wynn’s seven pools.

Dining and Entertainment
Award-winning dining experiences, dazzling entertainment and some of the most iconic designer labels in the world are steps away once the business of the day is complete. For those indulgences, Wynn also offers a dedicated Restaurant Services team to assist with reservations and private parties, while the stylists at Wynn Collection are ready to put together a head-to-toe, banquet-ready look that is sure to turn heads. And when your attendees retire for the night, they’ll do so on the most comfortable, custom-designed beds on The Strip in rooms and suites teeming with amenities rooted in convenience.

With more Forbes Travel Guide Five Star Awards than any casino resort in the world, Wynn and Encore are not only ready to answer every need; we’ve already made sure the answers are ready and waiting.

“The best of the best in personal service and superlative style.”

**STEVE BLANNER**
Vice President of Sales

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**Facts and Features**

Guest Rooms/Suites: 2,716 rooms and suites at Wynn and 2,034 at Encore
Meeting Space: 260,000 sf
Special Services & Amenities: We offer high-tech support, a full-service business center, high-speed Internet access, spacious sunlit meeting spaces, state-of-the-art audio-visual capabilities and two technically supported stages are available.
The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel in Orlando, Florida, has promoted Kristina Moehle to group sales manager for the Southeast markets. She most recently served as catering coordinator.

Kelly Hartig was named group sales manager for the Midwest and West Coast markets. She previously served as catering sales manager for The Country Club of Orlando.

Allison Lesser has been named director of sales and marketing at Hotel Irvine in Orange County, California. She was vice president of business development at BTS Hospitality.

Catherine Rentschler was named director of sales for the Hyatt Place Washington DC/Georgetown/West End. She was senior sales manager for the Park Hyatt Washington, DC.

Omni Hotels & Resorts has promoted Ryan O’Byrne to corporate director, global sales in the Dallas corporate office. He was global director, sales in the New York global sales office.

Davenport Hotels, Spokane, Washington, has promoted Brian Anderson to national sales manager for the association and corporate group markets in the West, Midwest and Northeast markets. She was a sales manager for Davenport Hotels.

On The Move

MOEHLE
HARTIG
HEFFNER
D’BYRNE

The St. Regis Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia, has named Andrea Heffner as director of sales and marketing. She was director of sales and marketing at Hotel Jerome, an Auberge Resort in Aspen.
R.E.N. MEETINGS

Designed for the senses. Infused with local flavor. Everything you expect for your meeting. Done slightly less expected.

AT RENAISSANCE® HOTELS, IT’S BUSINESS UNUSUAL.

renmeetings.com