

Euromic – 2009 Top Ten Meeting Trends

Benchmark Hospitality International, a leading hospitality management company which operates 30 award-winning conference hotels, resorts, and conference centres in the USA and in Asia, announces its "Top Ten Meeting Trends for 2009," as observed by its properties:

Trend #1 The Business of Meetings is Business

This year more than ever before, the business of meetings is straight-up ROI. There's not a lot of room for leisure and extracurricular play where every single dollar is measured for its contribution to the success of the overall conference. Meetings have never been more serious, focused, or strategic -- or more regional.

Trend #2 It's Not Easy to be Green...

It's not easy to be green ... or at least it's not easy to be green in a challenged economy! Planners are a whole lot more focused at present on securing that property at the best price possible for their next meeting. In 2009, price trumps green.

Trend #3 We'll Get Back to you in Six Months

The first half of 2009 is proving to be a challenge with a lot of in-the-month-for-the-month meetings booked. Things are looking up in the 2nd half of 2009 though.

Trend #4 Stuffed, Packed, Studded with Value!

The demise of the complete meeting package is greatly exaggerated! But packages are expected to be loaded with value, add-on benefits, and there's a growing demand for double occupancy. Every meeting dollar must be measurable and welcome receptions, afternoons of leisure, and special dinner events are out. Working lunches and dinners, regional gatherings, doubling up in guestrooms and value-added options are what are in this year!

Trend #5 Believe It or Not, Teambuilding Remains!

Teambuilding is not D.O.A. Planners are negotiating hard on price, and fewer sessions are being scheduled this year over last, but companies continue to see value in the team-enrichment benefits offered through creative teambuilding programming, such as corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Trend #6 Tea for Two (make it herbal), Tee Times for Twenty

Maybe not this year. Tight budgets and serious meeting environments are taking their toll on extracurricular activities once so popular. There's no problem getting a spa or tee time this year, but it will be on the conferee's own dime and it better not be scheduled over a conference session.

Trend #7 I Plan, Therefore I am

Once again the industry is consolidating. Planning is increasingly seen as a part-time function ... with planning responsibilities loaded on already overwhelmed administrative personnel and department heads. And third party planners are re-emerging.

Trend #8 Three Squares a Day. That's it!

Gone are the welcome receptions, theme dinners and special luncheons. Planners' meal requests are pretty much limited to three square meals a day and that's it.

Trend #9 The Silver Lining

That's right ... there's a silver lining and it's found within select market segments where meeting demand is growing. These include government, military and defense-related meetings, as well as education, state associations and religious market gatherings. Perhaps this should make sense in these times. There's more. The medical, biotech and pharmaceutical segments remain strong too. Serious market segments for serious times, it seems – perfect for serious meeting environments.

Trend #10 Getting Serious About Learning Environments

Productive meeting environments have never been more put to the test or proven their worth more actively than right now. In a business environment where every dollar – every penny for that matter -- is meaningful and expected to yield a measurable ROI, dedicated meeting environments like conference centers deliver and planners are turning to them.

Source: Benchmark's Website at www.benchmarkhospitality.com.