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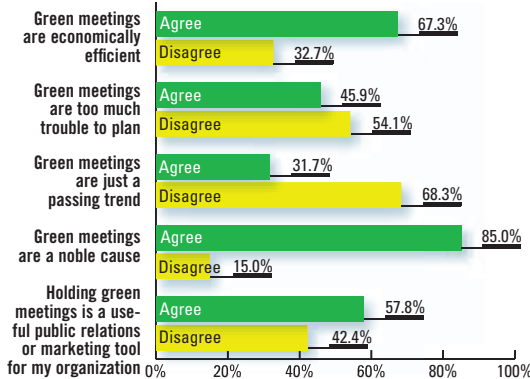
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[MEETINGNEWS EXCLUSIVE RESEARCH]

The Big Green Debate

On the whole, do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Source: MeetingNews survey of 235 meetings buyers



Despite the many benefits of holding environmentally responsible meetings, the vast majority of groups don't hold them. **page 12**

Hotel Biz Breaks Bank

Construction & renovation projects fill the landscape

By Rayna Katz

The current hotel sellers' market and the resulting high room rates sting meeting planners and attendees when they pay their bills. But a tangible payoff is developing: an avalanche of new and improved inventory.

Construction will begin on more new hotel rooms in 2006 than in any year since 2000. At the same time, more money is being spent on renovation this year than ever before, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers. (See charts, page 33.)

"Having new hotels to consider offers planners new opportunities and gives our attendees additional options for price points and product type," said Karen Malone, director of meeting services at the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society. "It also reinforces the trend that the meetings industry is on a positive track."

Bjorn Hanson, global hospitality industry leader for PwC, said, "We'll see occupancies escalate in 2006 to their highest level since 1996, and they will make this a year of record profitability."

That boosts the appeal of building new properties — or, for some owners and investors, taking over existing hotels, which typically precedes renovation.

"We're probably in the sweet spot of this current industry cycle. Investors see an opportunity to make money."

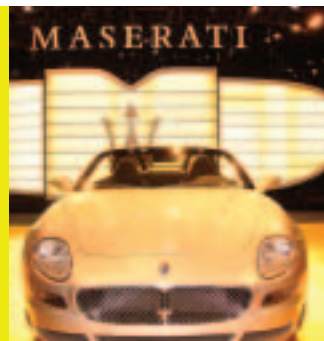
— Hilton vice president Bill Fortier

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NOT SO FAST: Officials at U.S. and Canada border checkpoints are delaying or denying entry for some meeting planners. **page 8**

- Money magazine's list of the 50 Best Jobs includes "meeting planner." **page 9**
- A pictorial collection of cool exhibit-design ideas from the New York Auto Show. **page 14 ▶**
- A look back: 1995 article disputed *The New York Times*. **page 15**
- Great golf that won't break the budget. **page 19**



It's Not Easy Being Green

Environmentally responsible meetings not yet gaining traction

By Sari Krieger

When planners hear the term “green meetings,” many have some idea of what that means, but few understand the concept well enough to have actually planned one, and even fewer are staunch advocates of environmentally responsible meetings.

“I have a long career as a planner and I haven’t planned a green meeting — not because I don’t want to, but because I haven’t been educated,” said Monica Compton, an Atlanta-based planner with Pinnacle Productions.

Of the 235 meeting planners questioned in a new *MeetingNews* survey, 37 percent said they know little or nothing about green meetings. Of the remaining 147 planners who knew something about green meetings and were then able to

answer the other questions, 47 percent said they don’t know enough to plan one.

“I am aware of these types of meetings, but I am not fully versed on what they include,” said Susan Kowelman, director of sales for Corporate Express Promotional Marketing in St. Louis.

When planners were asked to choose the top three things that most qualify a meeting or property as green, the most popular response, at 59 percent, was having energy-efficient lighting, heating and cooling systems and appliances. Then came having a recycling program, using paperless methods of correspondence, using water conservation methods, and encouraging re-use of towels and sheets.

“Things that come to mind are anything that is recyclable, organic fibers and

materials, location of meeting, energy demands, using technology like the Internet and email versus paper invites, and menu — vegetarian and seasonal products, etc.,” said Amy Qualmann, marketing events coordinator with Suby, Von Haden and Associates in Madison, Wis.

About half of the 147 respondents who are aware of or have planned green meetings said there isn’t much demand for them. “I’ve never had a client who requested a green meeting,” said Rebecca DeFilippo, owner of RD+2 Meeting Management in Fenton, Mo.

And 47 percent of those planners said there appears to be a lack of venues appropriate for such meetings.

“It is a challenge because you don’t have a lot of facilities that are doing green practices,” said Amy Spatrisano, president of the Green Meetings Industry Council and principal for Meeting Strategies Worldwide in Portland, Ore. “You have to be committed to making that happen. Not every venue even has recycling.”

Vicky Betzig, a Wisconsin-based meetings consultant, favors donating leftover food to shelters and said venues sometimes just need to be educated on how to offer a green meeting.

“I have run into facilities that say, ‘We can’t do that,’ and I say, ‘Oh yes you can.’ A lot of people don’t really understand what green means and don’t have the practical applications and the step by step on how to do it,” Betzig said.

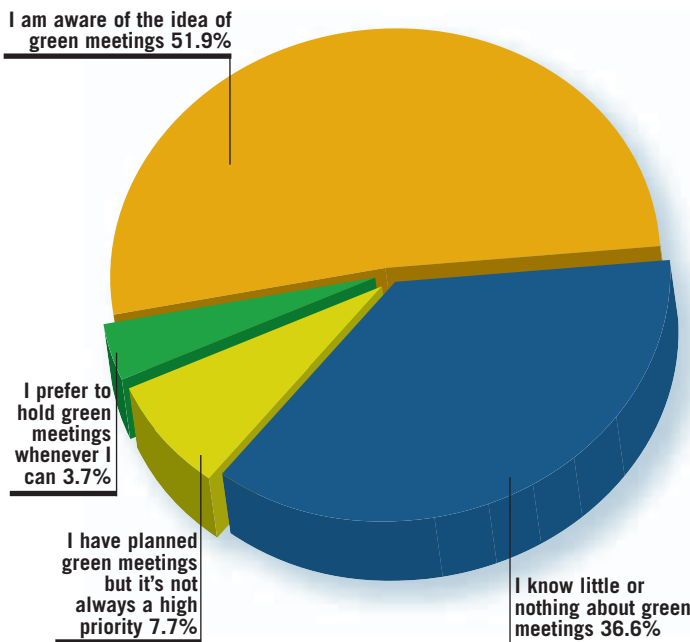
Sometimes just asking venues for more environmentally friendly services is all it takes.

“I am very careful when I plan my menu to choose things that are in season or local so that I am not paying for things to be transported,” said Karen Cheney of Main-Stay Events in Fishers, Ind. “A lot of chefs are doing that. Many times they will be very instrumental in planning with you.”

At Meeting Professionals International’s Professional Education Conference in Charlotte, N.C., this January, the association worked with the Charlotte Convention Center to recycle paper and plastic products; donated signs to local schools and churches for art supplies after the conference; allowed delegates to donate their name badges and shoulder bags at the end of the conference; and donated

Environmental Awareness

Which of the following best describes your awareness of and experience with planning green meetings?



Source: MeetingNews survey of 235 meetings buyers

leftover food to a local food bank, said MPI spokesperson Audra London.

Convention center officials decided to continue some green efforts even after MPI departed.

“We are looking at a new line of disposable products that have been 100 percent certified compostable by the Biodegradable Products Institute,” said William Triplet, director of food and beverage for the Charlotte center. “This could be a benefit to our industry and the environment.”

Some venues have already invested heavily in the idea of green meetings. The David E. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh and the Oregon Convention Center in Portland have earned a LEED certification — for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design — from the U.S. Green Building Council. But LEED is one of many certifications, and the industry would benefit from a unified standard for what makes a meeting green, Spatrisano said.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has certified 13 properties in the state under its Green Lodge program. Six of those venues are at the Walt Disney World Resort.

“In addition to the resorts that carry the certified Green Lodging designation, planners can rest assured that Disney’s commitment to the environment touches just about every aspect of our business, from recycling and energy conservation programs in all our theme parks and resorts, to innovative efforts taking place behind the scenes,” said George Aguel, senior vice president, Disney Resort Destinations.

Aguel said being green provides cost sav-

ings as well as environmental protection — and 67 percent of the *MeetingNews* survey respondents who are aware of green meetings agreed with that idea.

Marge Anderson, an MPI board member and associate director for the Energy Center of Wisconsin, touted the economic benefit of green meetings.

“Energy efficiency at a meeting facility is the biggest business ‘bang for the buck’ in greening a meeting, and often leads to better facility operations and maintenance and significant reduction in energy costs,” Anderson said. “In addition, the environment wins through less greenhouse gas

emissions from power generation.”

Spatrisano also promoted the business-friendly aspect of green meetings. She said she saved \$25,000 at a recent 9,000-attendee conference in Portland just by replacing bottled water with water coolers.

Also, Spatrisano said, hotels save money when they implement a towel and sheet reuse program for guests staying more than one night, and if a planner books a hotel within walking distance of the meeting venue, money can be saved on a shuttlebus. Using bulk condiments instead of individual packages, china instead of disposables, and advertising events by email rather than with flyers can save money and help the environment, she said, adding that these efforts only enhance the quality of the meeting.

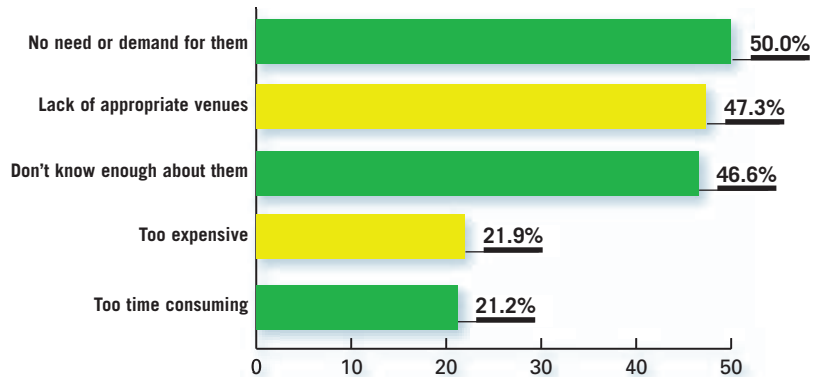
While most planners are not planning many green meetings, 85 percent of those who are aware of the concept said holding a green meeting is a noble cause, and 57 percent classified it as a good marketing tool.

“For some organizations like the Outdoor Retailer Association, promoting green meetings is a smart marketing tool,” said Michelle Bruno, president of Salt Lake City-based Bruno Group Signature Events. “Most of their constituents benefit from preserving the environment and/or creating more outdoor recreation space. They are more likely to support an organization that obviously shares those same values.” ■

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The Case Against Green

What are the biggest obstacles to your holding green meetings?*



* Participants were able to select up to two responses

Source: MeetingNews survey of 235 meetings buyers

What is a “Green” Meeting?

Which of the following do you think most qualifies a meeting or property as “green”?*

Energy-efficient lighting/heating/cooling systems and appliances	59.2%
Having a recycling program	45.6%
Use of paperless methods for correspondence	40.1%
Use of water conservation methods	40.1%
Encouraging re-use of towels and sheets	38.8%
Venue was constructed with sensitivity to surrounding natural environment	32.0%
A location requiring less travel for attendees	22.4%
A venue that is accessible by mass transit from the airport	19.7%
Use of non-toxic cleansers	15.6%
Serving organic/vegetarian foods	4.1%

* Participants were able to select up to three responses

Source: MeetingNews survey of 235 meetings buyers