

# MEETINGSANDCONVENTIONS

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## Breaking News

### First W in Western Europe Opens in Barcelona

By the M&C Staff  
10/7/2009

In Spain, the 473-room W Barcelona opened Thursday at Nova Bocana, on the waterfront where the Barceloneta beach boardwalk begins. The 26-story, sail-shaped property, the first W in Western Europe, includes a Bliss Spa, a signature restaurant by Catalan chef Carles Abellan, a rooftop bar, a W lounge, a fitness center and a poolside bar with private cabanas. Nearly 27,000 square feet of meeting space is available, including the Great Room, a grand ballroom with views of the Mediterranean.

#### Reed to Launch AIBTM in 2011

Reed Travel Exhibitions' first Americas Incentive Business Travel and Meetings Exhibition (AIBTM) will take place in Baltimore June 21-23, 2011. The show's debut already has been delayed twice; it was originally slated to launch in June 2009, but in June 2008, Reed announced that the date was pushed back to 2010. Last March, the company announced AIBTM would be postponed until 2011 at the earliest. Vanessa Cotton, chair of Reed Travel Exhibitions Meetings & Incentives Events, said, "Having consulted with the industry, we now feel that it is an appropriate time to announce the launch of AIBTM in 2011. When the global economic downturn hit the industry and we had to postpone the event, it was always our intention to consider 2011 as our goal for launch."

#### United Airlines Introduces Subscription Plan for Checked Baggage

United Airlines is offering a Premier Baggage program, a subscription service allowing United passengers to pay an introductory price of \$249 a year for the right to check two standard bags on any United flight, including United Express. The carrier's current domestic checked baggage fees are \$15 to \$20 for the first checked bag, and \$25 to \$30 for the second. The service also covers baggage fees for up to eight companions who are traveling under the same confirmation number as the subscriber. For more on United's subscription plan for checked baggage, click [here](#).

#### Manhattan Mixed-Use Development Resumes Construction

New York City-based developer The Related Cos. announced last week it will resume construction on a 1.2 million-square-foot mixed-use development in Midtown Manhattan, which had been put on hold when it faced financing issues late last year. Features of the project include a 59-story tower spanning an entire city block, at West 42nd Street between 10th and Dyer avenues. The tower will include a hotel, apartments and several theaters for nonprofit groups, to be designed by Frank Gehry. Work on the tower will begin shortly, and the project will open sometime in 2011.

#### Marriott Miami Hotels Complete \$70 million Renovation

The Marriott Miami Airport Campus, one mile from Miami International Airport, has completed \$70 million in renovations to its three properties, the 366-room Miami Airport Marriott, the 300-room Courtyard Miami Airport South, and the 163-suite Residence Inn Miami Airport South. The Miami Airport Marriott features the new Cane Fire Grille Restaurant and Lounge, a renovated lobby offering complimentary Wi-Fi, a new bar area and 17,000 square feet of meeting space. The Courtyard Miami Airport South has added 78 new rooms and the Champions Sports Bar and Grill. A total of 2,900 square feet of meeting space is available. Lastly, the Residence Inn Miami Airport South is a brand-new property. Its guests have access to the complex's 2,800-square-foot fitness center and outdoor heated pool. A complimentary airport shuttle is available for guests staying at the three properties.

## Airline Industry

#### Clear Expedited Airport Security Lanes Might Return

The New York Times reported last week that a California investment banker, Kurtis Fechtmeyer, has signed a letter of intent to purchase Verified Identity Pass, the company that ran the Clear expedited airport security lanes until its abrupt closure in early June. Fechtmeyer told the newspaper he believed his newly formed investment group could revive Clear by the end of the year. Click [here](#) to read the

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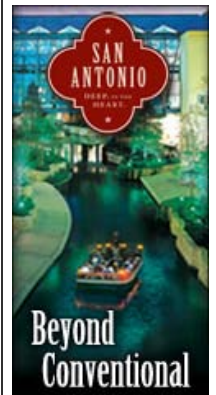
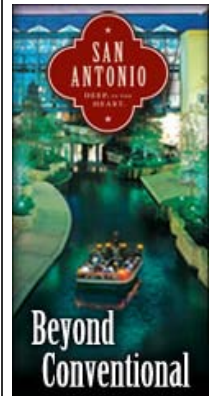
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How to craft an effective survey, including ways to set objectives and phrase questions to elicit useful attendee feedback.
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Here is a look at how familiarization trips are focusing on serious buyers and offering more nuts-and-bolts site inspections.
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Here are money-saving tips for organizing a green event, including ways to work with hotels and meeting venues, selecting décor, marketing and more.
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For expert advice on greening an association meeting, we went to four organizations who do it right.
- ▶ **Cool New Spa Treatments**  
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- ▶ **Preparing for the CMP**  
Q&A with planner Canaan Rice, shortly after she took the Certified Meeting Professional exam.
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- ▶ **Preparing for the CMP**  
Q&A with planner Canaan Rice, shortly after she took the



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[Invitation to Castaways 2009](#). October 15-18 at ME by Melia in Cancun. [Click](#)

Times' story.

### Jamaican Government Increases Departure Tax by 80 Percent

Last week the Jamaican government announced it would increase its departure tax from \$1,000 Jamaican dollars (US\$11.45) to JMD \$1,800 (US\$20.62) as part of "a minimal tax package." In a statement, Prime Minister Bruce Golding said the departure tax increase, along with a 20 to 25 percent tax increase on telephone cards and calls, were made because they are the easiest to apply and collect. The government hopes the taxes will help finance a \$1.7 billion gap in the country's 2009/2010 budget. The increase took effect Oct. 1, although airline tickets purchased prior to Oct. 1 will remain exempt.

### Associations

#### New MPI Foundation Director Named

The Meeting Professionals International Foundation has appointed Paula Hughes executive director. Hughes, whose first day was Monday, has served as the executive director and chief professional officer of three nonprofit organizations in North Texas.

### Convention Centers

#### New Website Opposes Nashville Convention Center

A new website called [Nashville's Priorities](#) has been launched by a citizens' group to oppose the construction of a new downtown convention center in the city, a favored project of Mayor Karl Dean. The site highlights the center and headquarters hotel's total projected cost of \$1 billion and asks readers to consider what else Nashville could purchase for that amount. However, raising questions about the grassroots nature of Nashville's Priorities, the [Tennessean](#) reported last Thursday that Gaylord Entertainment, which owns Nashville's Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, had donated \$8,500 to the group. Tom Ingram, a lobbyist for Gaylord, told the newspaper that Nashville's Priorities approached the hotel company, and that the hotel company was not attempting to prevent construction of the convention center. Rather, Ingram said, Gaylord is merely interested in "a positive discussion of what is in the best interests of Nashville, its leadership and Gaylord."

#### Convention Center and Hotel in the Works for Texarkana, Ark.

Last week, city officials in Texarkana, Ark., announced that a convention center and hotel will be built at Crossroads Business Park by a local investor. In a press conference, Texarkana city manager Harold Boldt said the center, on nine acres of land, would offer up to 20,000 square feet. Further details, including the size of the hotel, have not yet been released, pending finalization of the deal.

### Cruise Lines

#### New Cruise Meeting Portal Launched

[Seasite](#), a web-based resource for planning cruise meetings and events from cruise meeting specialists Landry & Kling, was launched last week.

### Deals

#### Four Seasons Extends "Meetings with More" Promotion

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts has extended its Meetings With More package. The promotion is now available at all Four Seasons properties for new meetings booked before March 31, 2010, and held by Oct. 31, 2010. The package includes complimentary daily continental breakfast, a 10 percent banquet menu discount, complimentary Internet access in guest rooms and general meeting room, one free guest room for every 30 room nights, no penalty for up to 25 percent attrition up to seven days before arrival, and a 10 percent credit on the next group program booked at any Four Seasons.

#### Dolce and Concorde Launch Name-Your-Price Promotions

Dolce Hotels and Resorts launched the "Make Us an Offer... Anything Goes" promotion at all 24 of its properties in North America and Europe. The promotion invites planners to request dates, location and meeting specifics and to name their own price. Hotel staff will evaluate offers and, if the requested price is too low, tell planners exactly what they can get for the price submitted. The promotion applies to conventions, meetings, team-building exercises, seminars, training sessions and product launches. Requests can be submitted through Dec. 18 for meetings to be held by May 31, 2010. Similarly, Concorde Hotels & Resorts is running a Name Your Price promotion at 21 of its properties in Europe, Africa and Japan. Planners can name a room rate for events, seminars or meetings held between Dec. 1, 2009, and April 30, 2010. Concorde's meeting teams will attempt to create a package to meet that price. The minimum offer is 99 Euros per night for a single-occupancy guest room. For details and participating properties see [concorde-hotels.com](#).

#### Marriott Offers Meeting Promotion at Caribbean Properties

Nine Marriott and Renaissance hotels throughout the Caribbean and Mexico, known collectively as Paradise by Marriott, have introduced special group rates for planners who complete Marriott's Meetings Excellence! online training program. Group partners must have a valid IATA/IATN number to be eligible. Exact rates and details vary by resort. More information is available at [marriott.com/grouppartners](#).

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[Here](#) to register or for more information.

### - Quick Poll

Would you stop shaking hands at business events to prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus?

Yes  
No