

CONVENTION TRENDS 2015

What's Ahead at Convention Centers for Meeting and Event Planners

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WELCOME



Tim Schneider

Successfully navigating the maze of meetings and events

Now in its fifth year, our annual Convention Trends section allows us to look at some of the most important issues affecting the professionals who organize meetings and sporting events at convention centers. In researching the stories for this section, our writers examined a number of current developments and considered their impact on the future of the meetings and events industry. We also took a look back at the history of the industry and profiled some of its most colorful figures and trendsetters whose names will always be associated with meetings and conventions.

In the following pages, you'll learn more about the top issues facing meeting and event planners, including ongoing struggles with technological advances; challenges related to labor and legal issues; and events and convention centers that have changed the way we meet. The information in this publication is designed as a reference tool to inform your decision making and to help you be more successful at navigating the maze of planning large-scale meetings, events and exhibitions.

It is our hope that this publication will contribute to the professional development of the international community of meeting and event planners and their partners at convention centers.

Timothy Schneider
Publisher

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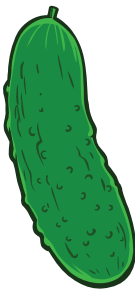
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CENTERS OF ATTENTION

By Steven Hacker, CAE

How developments at major U.S. convention venues have helped pave the way for progress



An expansion of the San Diego Convention Center is in limbo after a district court ruled that voters must first approve the funding.

as their outcomes will likely—or already do—affect rules, regulations and management choices faced by similar event venues in the future.

SAN DIEGO: EMBROILED IN LEGAL DISPUTES OVER CONTRACTS AND EXPANSION

No one could have predicted that the San Diego Convention Center Corporation (SDCCC) and San Diego City Council would become snared in not one but two legal soap operas. The first began when the SDCCC was sued by United National Maintenance, which had provided cleaning services for its event organizer clients in the center and was told in July 2007 that the center would become the exclusive provider of cleaning services and use its own staff for that purpose. UNM alleged that the SDCCC intentionally interfered with the contract, violated antitrust laws and threatened the company's prospects to enjoy economic advantage.

The case has made its way through various levels of the court system since then, and a district court ruling dismissed the claim for intentional

The 17th-century French author François de La Rochefoucauld once wrote “the only thing that should surprise us is that there are still some things that can surprise us.” Nothing could describe the environment in which convention centers and DMOs function more accurately.

Unfortunately, several major U.S. cities' convention centers have been grappling with unpleasant surprises over the last few years that have become well-publicized, problematic industry issues. And in an effort to

steer clear of an imbroglio or avoid similar missteps themselves, event planners and destination marketing organizations around the country are following these issues closely.

Though convention centers have the economic well-being of their destination at heart, their desire to remain viable and competitive often provokes conflict—in the following cases, with local companies, voters, trade unions, exhibitors and even technology providers. So let's take a look at some of the cities struggling with compromising situations, many still unresolved,

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CENTERS OF ATTENTION

interference with prospective economic advantage. In August 2014, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals found that the SDCCC is a public entity, operating as an “instrument” of San Diego as evidenced by the fact that its board members are appointed by the city, its assets revert to the city and that the SDCCC must publicly account for its operations, therefore making it immune from antitrust strictures. Judge Andrew D. Hurwitz stated that “no jury could reasonably find that SDCCC engaged either in monopolization or an attempt to monopolize by mandating that its own employees clean its building.”

However, the court did find reason to retry the portion of the case alleging the corporation’s interference with UNM contracts. In January 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court denied further review of the August 2014 ruling, which means that the alleged interference issue remains the only argument to settle. That claim is scheduled to be addressed in court on March 13.

Until its resolution, the eyes of the entire exhibition and events industry will continue to remain riveted on the issue of exclusive services because it involves both money and freedom, specifically the freedom of show organizers and contractors to enter into their own service agreements without possible negative repercussions.

San Diego’s second legal battle involved what heretofore has been the relatively routine matter of expanding a convention center’s space. The route used by most convention centers to fund an expansion (or renovation) of facilities has been to earmark a portion of a city’s hotel bed tax to provide some or all of the required financing. California state law, however, requires that any tax increase be approved by two-thirds of voters in the jurisdiction. Anticipating public pushback based on earlier experience, the SDCCC contrived a plan creating a hotel district so that hoteliers, not voters, would be

given the opportunity to approve the tax increase; predictably, the hoteliers, who would benefit from a higher demand for their guest rooms, approved the additional tax. But a group of activists cried foul and turned to the district court, which ruled last summer that voters, not hoteliers, must be given the opportunity to approve the tax levy.

Now the \$520 million expansion plans are in limbo as a public vote of approval seems unlikely, leaving Mayor Kevin Faulconer to consider alternate ways it might move forward. “How can we expand the convention center?” he was quoting as saying in a recent *San Diego Union-Tribune* story. “We have groups that want to come here that are too big for our place.”

PHILADELPHIA: FREED FROM UNION RESTRICTIONS

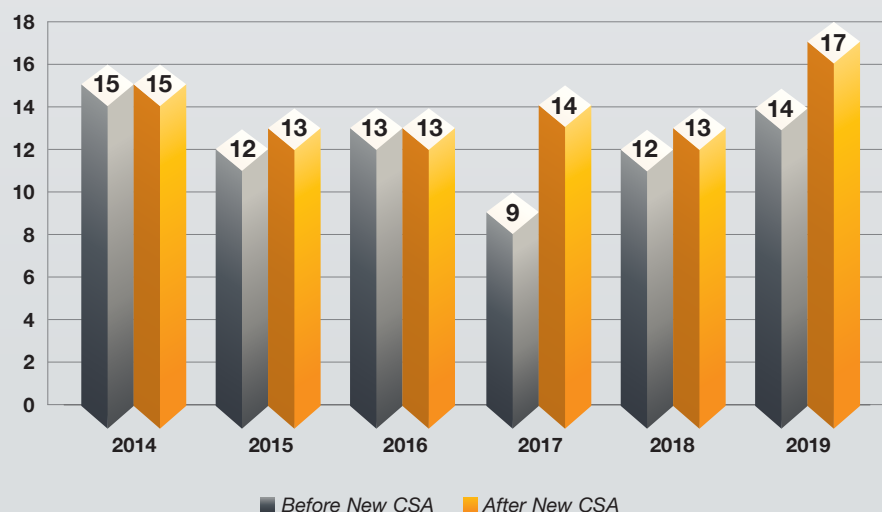
Who could have guessed that Philadelphia, long the icon of pervasive labor-union largesse, would morph into an architect of new, liberal work rules with accommodating attitudes and fruitful partnerships? Seemingly overnight, Philadelphia has

become a model for cities that host exhibitions and events.

For decades, exhibitors, show organizers and contractors complained bitterly about the exceedingly high costs, bizarre labor practices and lethargic worker attitudes they encountered at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Their frustrations were largely discounted or ignored by the six intransigent trade unions operating at the center and, as a result, many organizers took a pass on hosting events in Philadelphia. Things finally reached a tipping point last year when it was calculated that all the events that had planned to meet in the city between 2014 and 2017, but then canceled, represented an economic impact of \$1.3 billion and would have filled 925,000 hotel room nights. And when the carpenter’s union went on strike last spring—the second time in 12 months—convention center officials publicly wondered when unions would stop hindering business.

Cities in Philadelphia’s competitive set, including Chicago and Washington, D.C., had begun loosening their labor rules, which put Philadelphia in a compromised position, and events were flocking else-

PHILADELPHIA CITYWIDE EVENTS BOOKED SINCE THE NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE AGREEMENT



where: It was revealed that the number of citywide events was plunging perilously, from a high of 27 in 2002 to only nine booked for 2017, and a study by the University of Pennsylvania disclosed that the city was viewed as “indifferent to outsiders at best and hostile at worst.”

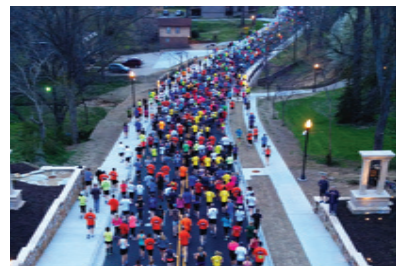
In late 2013, the convention center’s board of directors had awarded management to SMG, a global firm that manages 230 facilities in the United States and abroad, in hopes that it would “streamline and customize the customer experience,” according to a center press release. And in 2014, the city, convention center and Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau aligned and further resolved to take more decisive steps to stem the bleeding.

Most important was modifying the convention center’s customer service agreement, which detailed work policies, rules and procedures at the facility. It materially expanded exhibitors’ rights. Among the innovations were allowing exhibitors to use ladders, power tools and their own employees to build their exhibits as long as they didn’t exceed 600 square feet and declaring, for the first time, that the convention center management had the right to select experienced labor crews.

Despite the radical changes, four of the six labor unions quickly agreed to the revisions in May, apparently recognizing that failure to do so would likely dry up what remaining events were scheduled to meet at the center. (Several spokesmen for the four unions said as much to the press.) The two holdouts—the carpenters and teamsters unions—remain closed out of the building today and a ruling on February 2 by the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board dismissed the unfair labor practices charges filed against the center by those unions. The remaining four unions have assumed all of the work formerly performed by the carpenters union and teamsters union (which operated vehicles).

Since the adoption of the new agreement, the results have been astonishing and have, to an extent, turned the convention center around for incoming exhibitors. According to Bob McClintock, SMG’s COO and senior vice-president of convention centers, “The condition of the show floor today is light-years from the condition of PACC in the years prior to the new customer service agreement.”

Perhaps most remarkable about this Philadelphia story is that the previously ironclad unanimity among all unions has been shattered. Suggesting that stagehands, electricians, riggers and painters would step in to replace the striking carpenters and teamsters would have been inconceivable before now. The chart on the previous page demonstrates what happens when exhibitors, organizers, building man-



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A new customer service agreement at the Pennsylvania Convention Center has greatly expanded the rights of exhibitors.

agement and labor align in a working partnership. It is clearly a new dawn for Philadelphia as well as the exhibition and events industry.

THE WI-FI CONUNDRUM: DOES THE FCC NEED TO ADD MORE REGULATION?

Wi-Fi access at hotels and convention centers is certain to remain a front-burner issue, especially in light of Marriott's recent jamming of guests' personal Wi-Fi hotspots at its Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, which resulted in a \$600,000 Federal Communications Commission fine. At a 2013 conference held at the hotel, it was discovered that the hotel had jammed attendees' personal Wi-Fi hotspots (a service generally paid for by individuals) but charged organizers and exhibitors upwards of \$250 per access point for usage.

According to an Associated Press story, Marriott has instructed its hotels not to use the jamming technology as it was used at the Gaylord Opryland but it defended its rights to block guests' personal Wi-Fi networks in the interest of network security (citing identity theft as an issue) as long as it utilized FCC-approved technology to

do so. Hospitals and universities, it stated, also use jamming practices.

Last summer, the American Hospitality & Lodging Association petitioned the FCC to adopt new rules defining how hotels and convention centers can better protect the integrity of their networks. Also part of the issue is the fact that multiple access points on a convention floor can inhibit the performance of the property's Wi-Fi network. In response to the association's petition, technology providers and CTIA-The Wireless Association counter that blocking Wi-Fi hotspots is not the solution.

Mark Haley, president of Smart City Networks, which provides Internet access to conventions centers, said that the problem of Wi-Fi overload adversely affecting network capabilities is a very real one. The use of mobile devices has exploded so much that it often results in network chaos at a big event. He explained it this way: "Imagine the densest area traffic in any big city, say Midtown Manhattan. Obviously, not all of the cars and trucks would expect to have a green light at the same time. It's the same with Wi-Fi. We need to develop ways to control the flow of traffic so that all users have a reasonably efficient experience."

If the FCC adopts rules regarding Wi-Fi, it can be argued that they might provide order and efficiency. Enormous investments in infrastructure and equipment are at stake so the outcome of the association's petition is one that will be watched with interest.

MOVING FORWARD ON A PATH PAVED BY PREDECESSORS

As we've witnessed over the last year, the subjects of antitrust and communications laws and local labor regulations (and relations) have widespread applicability, but they especially hit home when a case comes to court that addresses specific issues faced by those of us working in the events industry on a monthly basis.

Can we bring in our own work team to build our event floor? What are the possible repercussions of an expansion at our city-run venue if we don't pass it by voters? Can we get around a hotel's Wi-Fi fees if we bring our own personal hotspots to an event? Would our meeting venues benefit from the trend of privatized management? These are just some of the questions that organizers continue to ask but, at least for now, we have more clarification on ways legal recourse might play out should we move forward with similar actions.

The events taking place in San Diego, Philadelphia and elsewhere are emblematic of the new and very unpredictable nature of the industry's business climate. But hope springs eternal. If entrenched institutions like union labor in Philadelphia can transform, it is evident that the events industry can change for the better for everyone, from attendees and organizers to host venues and convention and visitors bureaus. It's nice to be pleasantly surprised. ■

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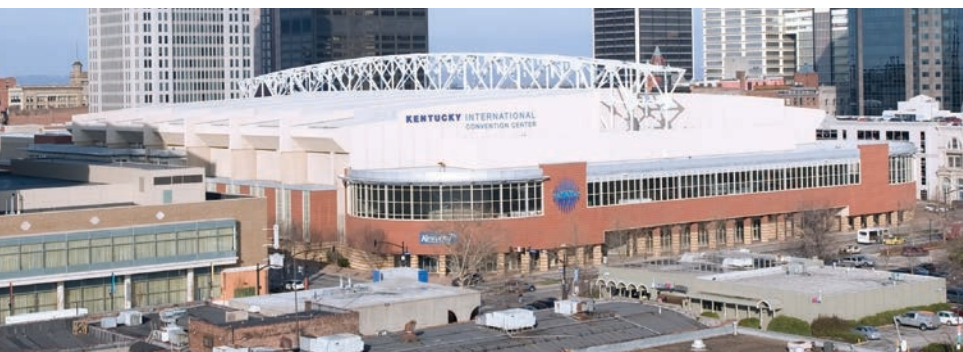
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THE NEW WAVE IN TECH

By John Conroy

Convention centers and other venues have many new options available to keep attendees wired and connected

The wireless revolution is trending in the events industry. As a result, the widespread use of smartphones and tablets has sparked convention centers and hotels to upgrade their Wi-Fi infrastructures in order to meet customer demand for connectivity.

A 2014 study by the event-consulting company Time & Place Strategies revealed a range of technology trends impacting convention centers, including on-site data capture, social media marketing and Wi-Fi security. But it's the "ubiquitous wireless experience" that's driving a major push toward facility upgrades, according to Mark Haley, president of Smart City Networks, which provides technology and telecommunications services to the industry.

From a competitive standpoint, wireless capacity has become more critical as a differentiator for convention centers, Haley said. "It used to be that as long as you had a solid network and sufficient bandwidth coming into the facility, there were a lot of wired services for the show," he said; however, for the past three to five years, mobility services have become the critical selling point for venues.

It's a changed world for attendees, promoters and event planners, much of it due to advanced wireless capabilities. "People leave their houses with a charged cell phone, money in the bank and the clothes on their back," Haley said. "They don't need much more than that." At the airport, travelers check in with their phones, at their destination they pay for cab rides with their phones, and at the event site they want to make sure their devices are working and they can connect to the home office, he said. So if venues and hotels can satisfy the needs of everyone—show managers, exhibitors, attendees—they need to be equipped with essential wireless technology. "That's the focus right now," Haley said. "That's what event planners are really looking for."

TRENDS IN WIRELESS

More convention centers than ever before are offering free high-speed Wi-Fi, according to Paul Christiansen, a former event manager at the Spokane Convention Center in Washington and now event services director for the Spokane (Washington) Sports Commission, the Spokane Arena and the INB Performing Arts Center. The Spokane Convention Center currently has a very strong Wi-Fi system, Christiansen said, noting how much the latest in technology has made a difference: "In the past, Wi-Fi was offered for free, but it was such a slow speed and was good only for sending emails." Attendees wanting faster speeds used to pay extra for the ser-

THE NEW WAVE IN TECH

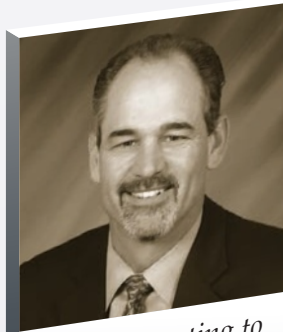
vice. Today, Christiansen views free high-speed wireless as “the norm” in convention centers.

Jeff Smith, managing director of events and technology for USA Gymnastics, said that his organization frequently sets up arena-type configurations in convention centers and, because of this, a venue’s connectivity is crucial. “Internet connectivity is an important issue for us,” he said. “In a couple of convention centers, we often need to create a private network, and it’s very important that we’re able to get a hardline connection and be able to put up our own access points.”

Smith has found that most convention centers have acceptable wireless technology and practices, though the more trade-show oriented put in jamming equipment to prevent others from setting up a Wi-Fi access point. In these cases, he said, “It’s just a matter of working with them from a pricing standpoint so they’re not charging you exorbitant rates to do that.”

Recent news reports confirm that telecommunications providers are busy trying to meet event planners’ wireless needs. In January, Smart City announced a \$2.5 million upgrade to the Wi-Fi system at the Anaheim Convention Center in California; the new high-density Cisco network will have approximately 700 access points, a setup typically seen only at stadiums, according to Smart City, and the configuration includes technology that will enable wireless location-based services. The upgrade is expected to be complete by this fall.

Smart City also recently began installing network cabling, high-speed Internet access, Wi-Fi and turnkey data networking services at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The renovation work is part of a four-year extension of Smart City’s contract with the Anschutz Entertainment Group, which manages



“You’re starting to see some use of beacons as a quick way to grab data to communicate with attendees as they’re walking through a venue.”

Mark Haley
Smart City Networks

the convention center. The telecommunications company has also renewed its contracts with convention facilities in Seattle, San Diego and Fort Worth. The key, said Haley, is to make the networks scalable in order to accommodate everything from local dog and cat shows to volleyball tournaments to mega-events such as Comic-Con.

Another city dedicated to improving its venues’ wireless capabilities is Boston. In December, the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority began a \$2.6 million overhaul of the wireless infrastructure at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, the center’s fourth upgrade since 2004. This project will increase the number of wireless access points from 113 to at least 580 and will include the installation of a high-density system to improve overall signal strength and enable more users to connect at each access point. The new technology is expected to be ready and working by year’s end. In addition, the authority plans to begin developing a similar wireless upgrade for the city’s John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center. It hopes to begin installation in 2016.

SECOND-SCREEN WORLD

The “second-screen” phenomenon tied to television viewing and sports programming has greatly contributed to the growth of wireless connectivity, said Francis J. Friedman, president of the New York City-based Time & Place Strategies consulting company. Levi’s



Sports organizations such as USA Gymnastics that use ballrooms for competitive events say connectivity is crucial for attendees.

Stadium, the new home field of the NFL's San Francisco 49ers, is a good example of how the trend has impacted sports facilities recently, Friedman said. After surveying its fan base, the 49ers spent \$125 million on the stadium's Wi-Fi and communications technology, which included the installation of 680 Wi-Fi access points—one for every 100 seats—some 12,000 Ethernet ports and an incredibly fast fiber-optic cable that connects the stadium's network to the general Internet. "(Fans) like to have conversations about the game with their friends and they also wanted to be able to see the television feeds coming in over the Internet," Friedman said.

Not surprisingly, millennials are a major reason for the phenomenon. "As the smartphone becomes the tool of choice, especially for the younger generations, the ability to connect the smartphones becomes a key factor in facility design," said Friedman, who chaired an industry task force established by the International Association of Exhibitions & Events to identify future trends. Representatives of convention centers in Boston and Orlando who were on the committee raised several facilities-related

issues, he said, including the level and type of wireless service that should be offered to a "regular trade-show organizer" and how broadly that technology should be installed throughout the facility. "In other words, does it need to be in the corridors and public spaces as well as within the trade-show halls themselves?" asked Friedman. "This certainly becomes a factor for sports programming, because if you're going to the bathroom and a basketball score changes, for example, you want to be able to keep up with the game even though you're standing in line to get into the ladies room."

"We by and large live in a multi-screen world," said Wilson Tang, senior director of experience design and digital strategy for FreemanXP. The burgeoning experience marketing agency recently launched FXP touch, a web-based, second-screen application with *klowd.com* that is designed to broaden attendees' interactions at events through use of their mobile devices. FXP touch enables attendees to "deep-dive" into information that might be "too dense for the general audience," Tang said.

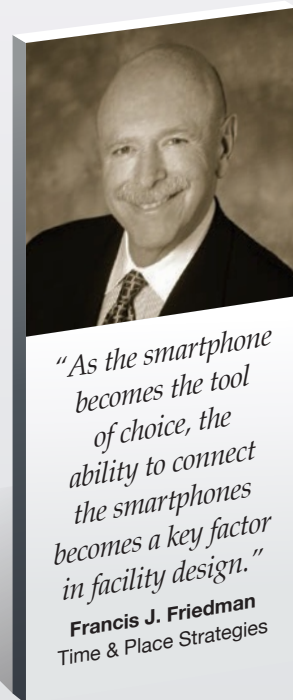
"You may not even have to make it inside for the big keynote (address)," Tang said, because participants can walk around the expo space while viewing the presentation on their phones. In addition, the technology lets users give real-time feedback and bookmark sections of a presentation for later reference. "We think this is how people want to interact at events," said Tang. "Rather than try to compete with the mobile device, we're augmenting the experience with the mobile device."

Tang said FreemanXP is "bullish" about a related trend with wireless beacons, which hold a lot of promise for meetings and sporting events. The Bluetooth devices emit low-energy wireless signals that indicate the proximity of a particular spot to a person's smartphone or tablet. A Major League Baseball beacon app, for instance, could determine a person's distance from a hot dog stand, he said, and if

hot dog sales are low, the stadium could push a 50 percent-off deal to anyone with the app walking by the hot dog stand at that exact moment.

In the case of the 68,500-seat Levi's Stadium, there are about 1,000 beacons. Its stadium app works with Bluetooth-enabled smartphones running on either iOS or Android systems to help fans find locations like seats, concessions and restrooms. Fans must opt in to use the system.

"You're starting to see some use of beacons as a quick way to grab data to communicate with attendees as they're walking through a venue," said Haley. The San Diego Convention Center uses a

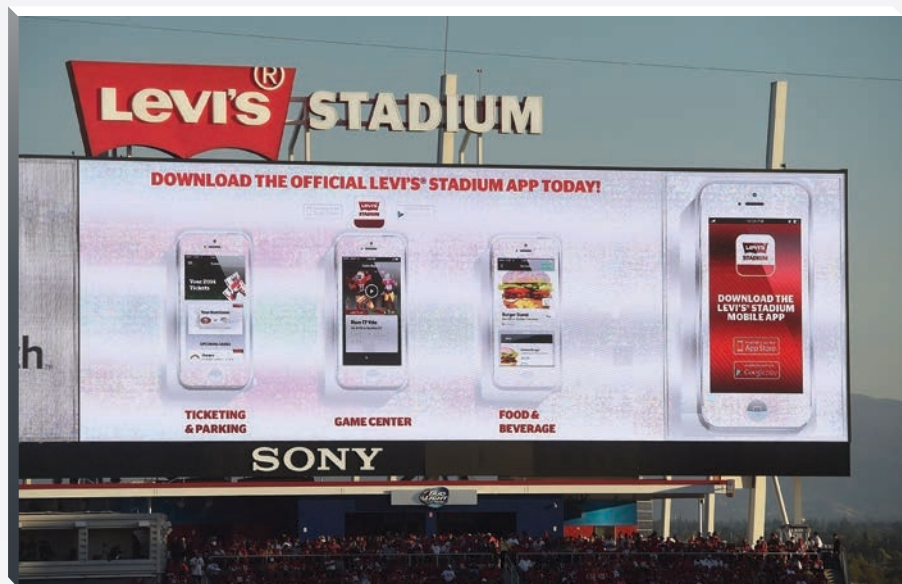


USA Gymnastics

beacon system that works with a convention center app and a San Diego visitors app to send videos of local attractions to people as they near the center. "We're looking to work with their developer to expand that (capability) and tie in the Wi-Fi network to that as we make our upgrades," Haley said.

SECURITY CONCERNS

All of this connectivity raises security issues, of course, and security is the reason that Marriott gave for



The technology at Levi's Stadium, including an in-stadium app, could be implemented at other venues as well, including convention centers.

blocking guests' use of their own mobile hotspots in the conference facilities at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel & Convention Center in 2013. The Federal Communications Commission investigated the matter after a visitor to the Gaylord filed a complaint that personal hotspots had been disabled. According to the FCC, Marriott employees had used the Gaylord Opryland's Wi-Fi monitoring system to "deauthenticate guest-created Wi-Fi hotspot access points in the conference facilities." The hotel then charged exhibitors and attendees \$250 to \$1,000 per device to use the hotel's Wi-Fi service in the conference area.

In 2014, the FCC fined Marriott \$600,000 for violating Section 333 of the Communications Act. The bureau also required the corporation to cease unlawful use of the Wi-Fi blocking technology and to improve how it uses the monitoring system at the Gaylord Opryland. The consent decree also requires Marriott to file compliance and usage reports with the FCC every three months for three years for any property owned or operated by the hotel chain.

In its defense, Marriott said that as a network operator it needed to prevent impostor hotspots from compromising the security of attendees using the Opryland's meeting and conference

spaces. Citing the threat of wireless cyberattacks, Marriott and the American Hotel & Lodging Association filed a rule-making petition last year with the FCC asking the agency to clarify the legal steps that hotel operators can take in order to minimize these threats.

In their petition, Marriott and the AHLA argued that "any access point



"Rather than try to compete with the mobile device, we're augmenting the experience with the mobile device."

Wilson Tang
FreemanXP

can be used to launch an attack against an operator's network or threaten its guests' privacy (for example, by attempting to obtain guests' credit card or other personal information).

Likewise, multiple Wi-Fi access points operating in a meeting room or on a convention floor of a hotel can adversely affect the performance of the hotel's Wi-Fi network. If a hotel is powerless to address such activities to ensure the security and reliability of its Wi-Fi network on its premises, both the hotel and its guests would suffer."

"From a security standpoint, the problem they're addressing—fake networks—does exist," said Tang. The average attendee, he said, may not know whether the network he's connected to is legitimate. "That being said, there's a balance we have to strike, as with everything else when dealing with security and technology, and how people use the freedom we're giving them," he said. "Some people may trust only their hotspot. That should be their prerogative."

During the public comments phase, Smart City Networks filed a statement with the FCC in favor of Marriott's position on deauthentication. "We support the petition, especially from the standpoint of rule making," said Haley. Deauthentication is a "well-known security feature that is authorized by the FCC," he said, claiming it was the first time that the bureau informed anyone "that you're not allowed to use it the way Marriott used it."

The Consumer Electronics Association and wireless industry groups publicly urged the FCC to rule against the petitioners. Julie Kearney, vice-president of regulatory affairs for the CEA, acknowledged in the trade group's public statement to the bureau that "a legitimate and pressing need" exists for network management and security of Wi-Fi systems. Nevertheless, the CEA argued that "the commission should affirm that Wi-Fi operators may not transmit deauthentication frames to third-party Wi-Fi systems or devices.

Network management and security practices are critical, but should be limited to an operator's own system, not the Wi-Fi systems of other service providers." Alternatives to Marriott's proposed solution for preventing "honey pot" attacks include informing guests about proper log-in procedures and giving them correct information about authorized Wi-Fi networks at the site, she wrote.

Facing a public relations nightmare, in early January Marriott announced that it would not block guests from using their personal Wi-Fi devices at any of its managed hotels. The hotel chain said it would continue to seek guidance from the FCC on appropriate security measures.

THE NEXT BIG THING

Smith said that setting up a workable network is a problematic issue only 10 percent of the time. Pricing is

the biggest hindrance for venues. "Often in convention centers, they've sold that contract to somebody, and that's where they make all their commissions to fund the convention center. So the pricing is really outrageous," he said, noting that it's fairly common for centers to offer the rent for free but then make up for the discount by charging for the Internet and catering at higher rates than the rent for the facility.

Friedman said meeting planners "need to get into the nitty-gritty of bits and bytes" when negotiating contracts and "not just accept a catering manager saying, 'Yeah, we have plenty of capability,'" Friedman said. "Get into the specifics: 'Do you have capability in the rooms equal to what you have in the lobby? Is it only available in the lobby? Is it 4G all the time or only in the lobby? Is it free only in the rooms or is it free only in the lobby and only charged in the rooms?'" He also sug-

gested bringing an engineer to the facility right before the event in order to verify that the contracted wireless requirements have been met.

Convention center managers and meeting planners will need to quickly adjust to this talking, texting, tweeting, streaming and posting world or the next big thing will be upon them sooner than they realize. "I think it's going to be a continuing evolution—and sometimes it seems like a revolution more than an evolution—of how big data, cloud computing and all the social media integration continue to come together and developers and show managers learn how to use that more effectively," said Haley. "As our networks grow more robust, they'll figure out bigger things to do with them. And it will probably involve big data and the location-based services and having a more granular view of their attendees and their events." ■



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CONVENTION TRENDSETTERS

By Nancy Mann Jackson

Learning from shows that have changed the way we meet

The past few years have been positive ones for the convention industry. The number of people attending meetings increased 10 percent between 2009 and 2012, up to nearly 225 million, according to figures from the Convention Industry Council's Economic Significance Study, released last February. While the industry has experienced overall growth, especially notable are some leading conventions that not only have experienced exponential growth far beyond 10 percent but have changed the way many people organize their events.

For instance, in the past 10 years, TED conferences have grown from two live events each year to hundreds, including

a five-day global conference, a medical conference, conferences for women and youth, and hundreds of independent regional conferences. Events like TED, as well as Comic-Con and South by Southwest, have found wide success by doing things in a distinctive way and creating agendas that have a major impact on their audiences; in doing so, they have become role models of the industry, leading changes while continuing to stay at the forefront.

TED

About the event: The TED Conference was launched in 1984 by architect and graphic designer Richard Saul

Wurman, who observed a convergence of the fields of technology, entertainment and design. The second conference wasn't held until 1990, but since then, the concept has steadily attracted smart thinkers interested in sharing and learning about some of the world's best ideas. Without breakout sessions or panel discussions, TED has built its reputation on "TED talks," which consist of a single speaker given 18 minutes to present "the talk of their lives," said June Cohen, executive producer of TED Media.

Today, TED has expanded its scope beyond the original three fields to "encompass the idea that all knowledge is related," Cohen said. "Most of us spend time at conferences that are focused on our own industries, which are very valuable, but TED provides an inspired view of what's going on in other industries. I always walk away with a new way of looking at my own field." The big annual TED Conference is currently held in Vancouver, British Columbia, one of the organization's two headquarters (the other is New York City), with companion events held across the globe. This year's Vancouver conference, scheduled to be held this month at the city's convention center with more than 70 speakers, is already sold out.

In the past 10 years, TED has grown from hosting two live events each year to hosting hundreds.



"There's nothing like TED," said Dave Gazley, vice-president of meeting and convention sales at Tourism Vancouver. "It's the only place where you can find 1,500 people in a room, some of them among the smartest people in the world, that really are trying to change the world for the better."

Ongoing innovation: In 2006, TED posted about 40 talks from its live conference on its website, YouTube and iTunes for public viewing. Within six months, those talks had been viewed more than 3 million times. Based on that success, TED leaders decided to make video production and posting an integral component of their operation to bring TED's "ideas worth spreading" to more people. The new *TED.com* launched in 2007, and since then, some 2,000 talks have been posted online and have garnered more than 1 billion views. And in 2014, TED talks were available for live viewing during the conference for the first time.

Setting trends: Gazley recently attended a meetings-industry conference and noticed how many of the keynote addresses and sessions were available to non-attendees through live streaming, something he attributes to TED. "Whether organizers consciously link that to the TED conference or not, that trend likely started with TED," he said. "A lot of other events have modeled their communication strategies after the fact that you're able to see TED talks digitally and in real time."

In addition, he said, TED organizers have distinguished the event by modifying traditional settings for viewers. The theater for the 2014 convention was installed at the Vancouver Convention Centre by TED over four days using local materials and designed with 13 seating options (including a sofa) and a stage that put the speaker mid-level with the audience.

They also set up "really cool viewing areas throughout the convention center" for attendees who want a break from the theater setting but are still interested in

hearing the content. This strategy, in particular, Gazley is seeing replicated at other conferences: More groups are setting up unique, inviting areas where people can watch and listen to presentations that are happening onstage.

COMIC-CON

About the event: In 1970, a group of comic book fans in Southern California created what was initially called San Diego's Golden State Comic-Minicon, a one-day event held at the downtown U.S. Grant Hotel. Since 1991, the four-day extravaganza now known as Comic-Con International: San Diego is held at the San Diego Convention Center. It generates nearly \$3 million in tax revenues, is reported on by more than 3,000 registered members of the media from across the globe and "is the



focus of civic attention every July," said Steven Johnson, vice-president of public affairs at the San Diego Convention Center Corporation.

Along with panels, seminars and workshops with comic book professionals, the convention offers previews of upcoming feature films and portfolio review sessions with top comic book and video game companies. Evening events include award ceremonies, an annual costume contest and

the Comic-Con International Independent Film Festival, which showcases films that do not have distribution or distribution deals.

To accommodate its large number of exhibitors, which include movie studios, TV networks, comic book dealers and collectibles merchants, Comic-Con utilizes a 460,000-square-foot exhibition floor. Another popular feature of the show is Artists' Alley, where comic artists sign autographs and sell (or give away) sketches; last year this section drew more than 200 such artists.

Ongoing innovation: In recent years, Comic-Con has attracted more than 130,000 attendees, which is testing the limits of the San Diego Convention Center. Though the venue underwent an expansion in 2001 and is exploring other ways to grow, it is not able to accommodate every component of the event. As a result, organizers have made use of a variety of satellite locations, including local hotels and outdoor parks, for various programs, games, anime expositions and two signature Comic-Con events—the Comic-Con International Independent Film Festival and the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards—which last year took place at the Marriott Marquis/San Diego Marina and the Hilton/San Diego Bayfront, respectively.

Though city and convention center officials say the use of various nearby venues creates a campus-like feel in downtown San Diego during the convention, Comic-Con organizers say they have received proposals from other cities that would like to host. The event is only committed to stay in San Diego through 2016.

Setting trends: Like TED and other major conventions, Comic-Con has also inspired event organizers to utilize satellite locations in order to create a convention atmosphere throughout its destination city. Comic-Con is also respected for having built a close, long-time relationship with its host city that has been mutually beneficial for both

CONVENTION TRENDSETTERS



Created in 1970, Comic-Con International in San Diego now attracts more than 130,000 attendees over four days.

parties. In particular, the event has benefited the local economy and endeared itself to San Diego residents by promoting area restaurants and venues and scheduling numerous off-site events. Because Comic-Con started and grew up in San Diego, it has become “a source of pride for all San Diegans,” said Johnson.

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST

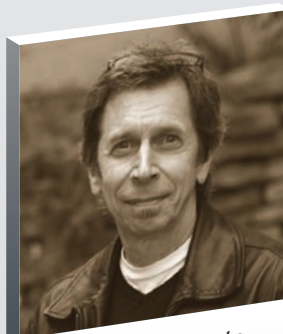
About the event: The South by Southwest Music & Media Conference & Festival, commonly referred to as SXSW, was launched in 1987 in Austin, Texas, by a group of locals involved in the music business. Seven hundred people attended. Today, SXSW is flocked to by thousands, and though the bulk of publicity focuses on its numerous live concerts, this music-industry conference has always involved trade shows and exhibits of some kind, said Mike Shea, SXSW’s executive director.

Aside from the increasing numbers of fans and participating musicians, the event has changed in other ways. Over the years, SXSW has evolved into much more than a music industry conference. Because some of the event’s founders were also involved in film and interested in multimedia and interactive technology, those fields were added to the conferences and festivals in 1994. “It was a natural step,” said Shea. As a result,

SXSW organizers now plan three separate yet concurrent events: the SXSW Music Festival, the SXSW Film Festival and the SXSW Interactive Festival.

These festivals have become a hot place to launch new artists, films and technology. For instance, the mobile app Foursquare was launched at SXSW 2009, and numerous hit recording artists—such as Hanson and John Mayer—have been discovered by agents and record labels at the festival.

Ongoing innovation: This year, SXSW is adding a topical track focused on sports, with sports programming to be included within all three events. Over the course of three days in March,



“People come to South by Southwest for face-to-face experiences they can’t get online.”

Mike Shea
SXSW

SXsports will feature more than 50 panels that explore “a broad view on the future of sport in all its forms, from both a technological and cultural perspective,” Shea said.

Setting trends: SXSW is known for using venues all around the city, many of which are unconventional. While that use of various venues has become trendy in the conventions and events industry, for SXSW, “it was more a survival tactic than strategic innovation,” according to Shea. When SXSW began as a conference for the music industry, it used downtown nightclubs to present a lot of artists, which was convenient because they were easy walking distance to the hotels, he said. “But over time, as the events grew and evolved, traditional venues couldn’t fill our needs and we had to find alternatives.” Today, its use of unconventional venues around the city has influenced many an event planner and is now a widespread practice.

Many organizers have also adopted SXSW’s method of adding various tracks or separate-yet-simultaneous events for the same audience. “We’ve seen a lot of events branch out from one sphere of interest—film or music or whatever—to include other disciplines that [the organizers] think their attendees might be interested in,” Shea said. “It’s possible some of them saw that happening at SXSW and decided to take it for a test drive at their own event.”

As SXSW looks toward the future, organizers remain convinced of its assets. “Quality is timeless, and we think presenting the best and most relevant programming possible is always a progressive strategy,” said Shea. “It’s also true that people come to SXSW for face-to-face experiences they can’t get online, and maximizing the opportunity for serendipitous encounters is part of our old-school-meets-the-future planning.”

It’s hard to argue with that. ■



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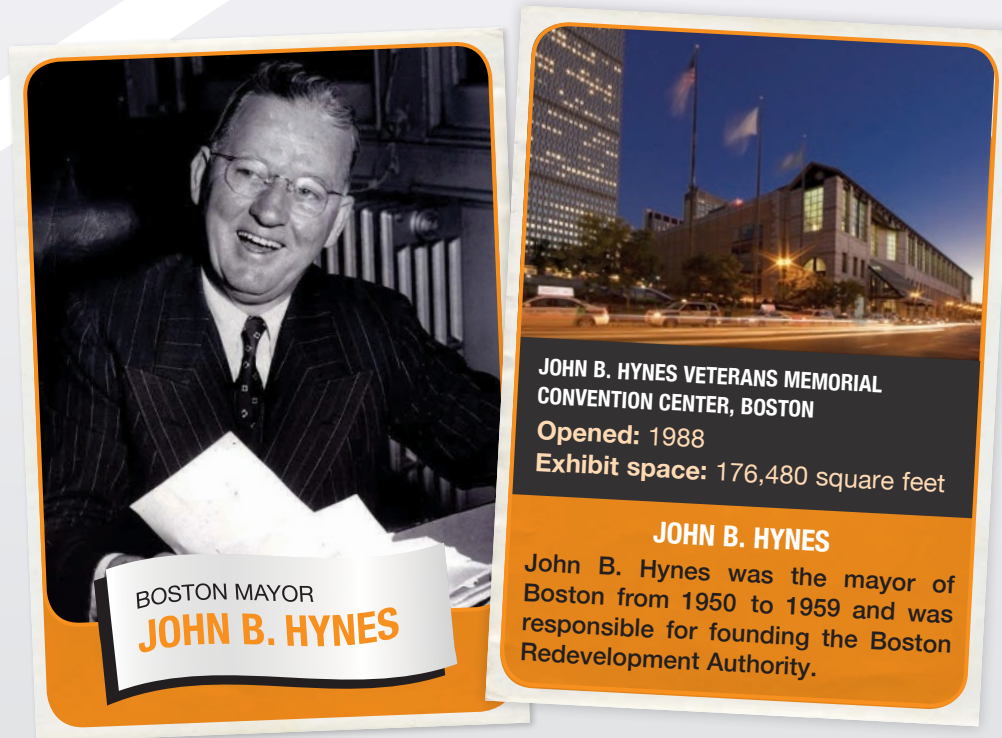
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LEGENDS OF THE HALL

By Laurie McLaughlin

A look at some legendary convention centers and the people for whom they are named



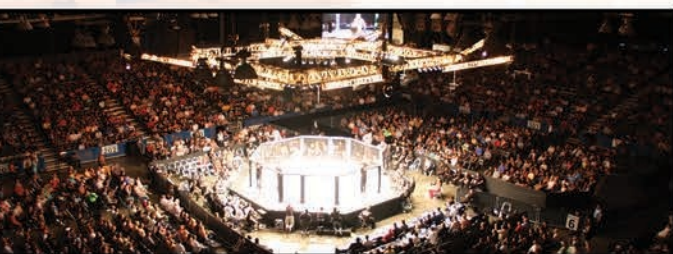
Across North America, the great convention centers that play host to millions of meetings and sports events each year are the results of vision, ambition and economic growth within their cities. Each of these grand halls set industry standards with their inception, but their legendary status is proved by the continual commitment to reinvent these structures, decade after decade, to keep up with the demands of the events industry in this new century.

Notable dedicated event venues are part of an elite group—including those in Las Vegas, San Francisco, New York City and Detroit, to name just a few—whose facilities have not only set the standard for the industry but have also helped shape the cities in which they were built. Most became leaders from the days their doors opened, but what

has kept them at the top of their game is support from city leadership and venue management, which have taken pains—and have regularly earmarked funding—to keep them current with the changing times.

RECHARGING THE ECONOMY THROUGH URBAN RENEWAL

Boston's John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center is one of the more legendary convention centers on the continent, named after the former Boston mayor credited with many of the city's better developments through the 1950s. His grandson, John B. Hynes III, said his grandfather was not one to boast about his time as mayor, so as a child, Hynes III didn't really understand his grandfa-



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LEGENDS OF THE HALL

ther's prominence. Hynes III was just 12 years old when his grandfather died, but as the grandson grew up and entered the city's real estate development business, he understood the substantial impact that his namesake had on his hometown.

"I met hundreds of people along the way who worked with him and respected him," said Hynes III. "In the 10 years he was mayor, he reinvigorated a city in decline. He had to be a visionary, a cheerleader and a messenger. He also had to be credible, because it took millions of dollars to turn the ship around."

Hynes, who held office from 1950 through 1959, was dubbed the "architect of new Boston" as he championed an urban renewal that would save a city suffering from a drop in both population and economic vitality. Among the many projects he launched was a development featuring a convention center in Boston's Back Bay. At the time of its construction in 1965, the War Memorial Auditorium—as it was initially known—was a very contemporary building that remade a neighborhood. The retired mayor passed away in 1970, and that year civic leaders renamed the auditorium after him; undoubtedly he would have been pleased as it has since been rebuilt and become a facility integral to the city's activity.

IMPROVING WITH THE TIMES

Back in the day, there was another youngster who grew up with fond memories of Boston's Hynes Convention Center: Jim Rooney, whose high school graduation was at the Hynes. One of his best memories was an outdoor expo he attended at the center. "It was a camping and fishing expo, and they filled a pool in the middle of the Hynes with fish, and if you caught the marked fish, you won

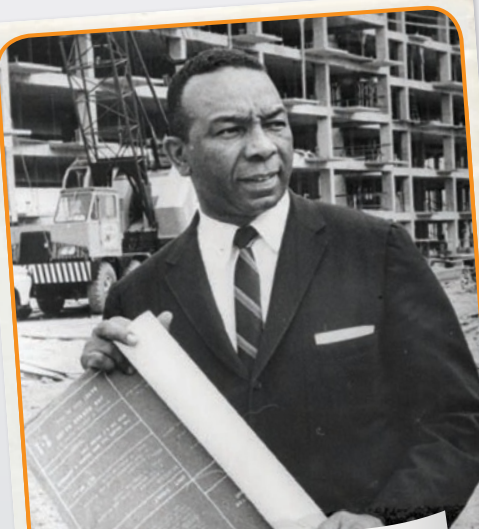
something big," said Rooney, who now serves as the executive director of the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, which operates both the Hynes and its sister events venue, the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. The Hynes not only hosts visiting groups but is frequently used for local events such as the Boston Marathon, whose finish line is just a couple hundred yards from the building. "In the immediate aftermath of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, the Hynes became the evidence repository for law enforcement," said Rooney.

The center has become such a part of the fabric of the district that when

the initial stages of redeveloping it so it remains useful and up-to-date for future meeting planners and visitors. "We are embracing and understanding some of the trends in the ways that the new generation of millennials want to use space and technology," said Rooney. "We have a significant opportunity here, and we have a team of people envisioning the Hynes and its role for the next 25 years."

CITIES RECOGNIZE OPPORTUNITIES

In the first half of the last century, cities like New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago and Detroit realized the need



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WALTER E. WASHINGTON



WALTER E. WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Opened: 1983

Total space: 2.3 million square feet

WALTER E. WASHINGTON

Mayor of Washington, D.C., from 1967 to 1979, Walter E. Washington was the first black chief executive of a major U.S. city. The convention center was named for him in 2006.

the newer Boston Convention & Exhibition Center opened a decade ago, the local community voiced their opinions, and they wanted the Hynes to stay, Rooney said. "It was interesting to hear testimony from the residential community talking about the life and vibrancy that is brought to the streets when all these visitors are around," he said.

While the Hynes continues to host a full roster of events, the authority is in

for meeting space on a much grander scale than their municipal auditoriums could accommodate. Global events, including the world's fairs in Chicago and New York in the 1930s, underscored the potential opportunity for permanent facilities that could host events that would draw thousands of visitors and their wallets.

"A box with docks," is how Bob McClintock described the very early days of convention centers, when the

structures were more or less warehouses with a loading dock. McClintock, senior vice-president and chief operating officer of the convention center division of SMG, which manages more than 240 venues in nine countries, said, "A center manager with the keys to the building would come in and open the doors for you, turn on the lights, and you were on your own."

With the increasing popularity of expansive public trade shows and the growth of associations, civic leaders across the United States began to think differently. For Las Vegas, a shift in thinking—and marketing—began in the 1950s as officials decided there was a lucrative business in the events indus-

As a result, the Las Vegas Convention Center opened in 1959 and that first year hosted 22,500 people during eight events. That convention center is now the third-largest such facility in the United States—in 2014 it hosted 48 conventions and meetings with more than 1.3 million attendees—and its upcoming two-phase expansion and renovation plan is expected to expand the facility's footprint to 5.7 million square feet.

VISIONARIES SHAPING CITIES

Like Boston, Chicago's convention center was named after a visionary:

feet of exhibit space, 23 meeting rooms and a 5,000-seat theater.

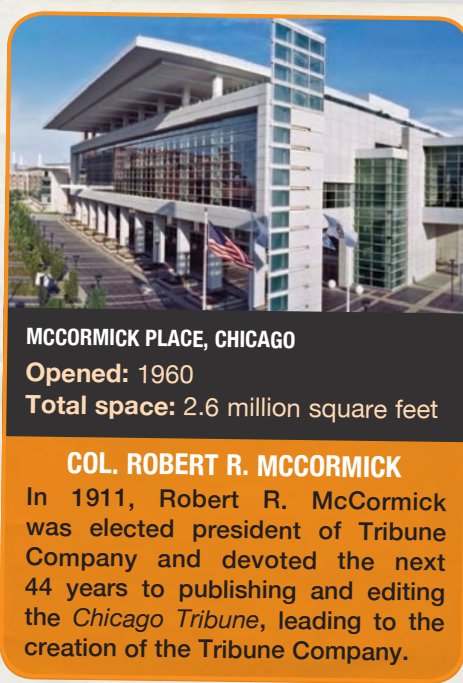
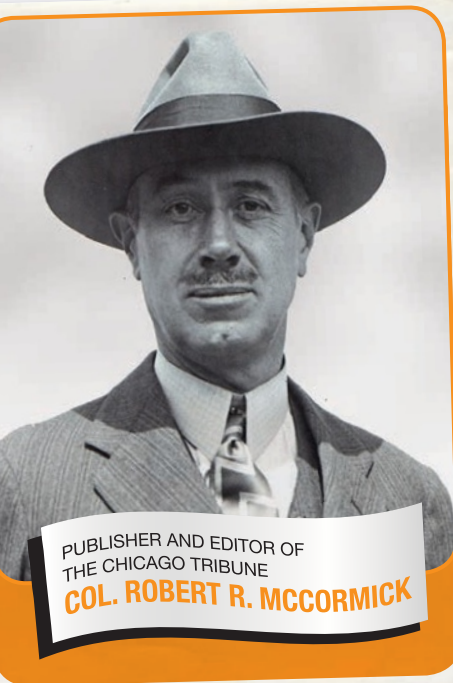
"And it burned to the ground in 1967," said David Causton, McCormick Place's current general manager. The 2 a.m. blaze took the life of a security guard, and despite the building's concrete and steel construction, the exhibition center was completely destroyed, packed as it was with plenty of fuel for the fire (a housewares show was to begin that day) but ill-prepared for such disaster as its design didn't include fire sprinklers. Because McCormick Place had proven to be a financial boon to the city, reconstruction began immediately. "Out of the ashes of the origi-

nal fire, a whole new convention center rose, and we've been expanding ever since," said Causton. "At the time, I would say we were about 10 years ahead of the competition. Except for Las Vegas, a lot of cities didn't get into the convention business until the 1970s, and by that point we were already talking about expansion."

Every decade since, McCormick Place has undergone enormous expansions, notably the 2007 addition of its West Building, which debuted with 470,000 square feet of exhibit space, 61 meeting rooms and a 100,000-square-foot ballroom—to planners, a grand investment in the meet-

ings and trade-show market.

"This building has a much higher ratio of meeting space to exhibition space, which was part of our realization that it wasn't about the big megatrade shows anymore. We also had to attract conventions and meetings," said Causton. "We've created a whole new business climate here to attract medium-sized events, more rotational events and corporate events that always wanted to be in Chicago but



try, said Chris Meyer, vice-president of global business sales for the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority.

"In the early 1950s, community leaders realized that the cyclical nature of tourism caused a significant decline in the number of visitors during the weekdays, the summer months and over the Christmas season," Meyer said. "A new market was identified—convention attendees—in order to attract more visitors to the area during slow periods."

Col. Robert McCormick, a man with strong, and often controversial, opinions. As the longtime editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, McCormick used his bully pulpit successfully to get the state to impose a 1 percent horse-racing tax that would finance a permanent convention hall. The colonel died before McCormick Place opened in 1960, but the venue was the first and largest of its kind with 320,000 square

LEGENDS OF THE HALL

never thought they could get in the door here."

Today, McCormick Place remains the largest convention facility in North America—its four buildings offer a combined 2.6 million square feet of exhibit space. And its immediate footprint is still growing: An adjacent 10,000-seat arena and a neighboring, 1,200-room Marriott Hotel are both expected to open in 2017.

CHANGING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

As the convention business grew exponentially in the 1980s, many of the West Coast's major cities were

facility developed underground beneath parks, museums and a playground, the Moscone Center includes nearly 123,000 square feet of lobby space, up to 106 meeting rooms and more than 700,000 square feet of exhibition space.

Spurring the center's development were a number of show organizers who liked bringing events to San Francisco but who could find no dedicated city venue larger than Brooks Hall, the civic auditorium that, at the time, hosted most major functions. But where would the city construct such a site?

"Placing this facility south of Market Street was a big controversy

the center was named for Moscone when it opened in 1981.

Improvements over the years have, not surprisingly, focused on high-tech amenities, a nod to the nearby Silicon Valley. "We do a tremendous number of high-tech shows, and we have all of the backbone our clients need," said Shaff, who noted an update a few years ago that included a \$4 million Wi-Fi system covering "every square inch of the facility." And last year the city planning commission approved a multimillion-dollar expansion that will enlarge the convention center to 1.5 million square feet.

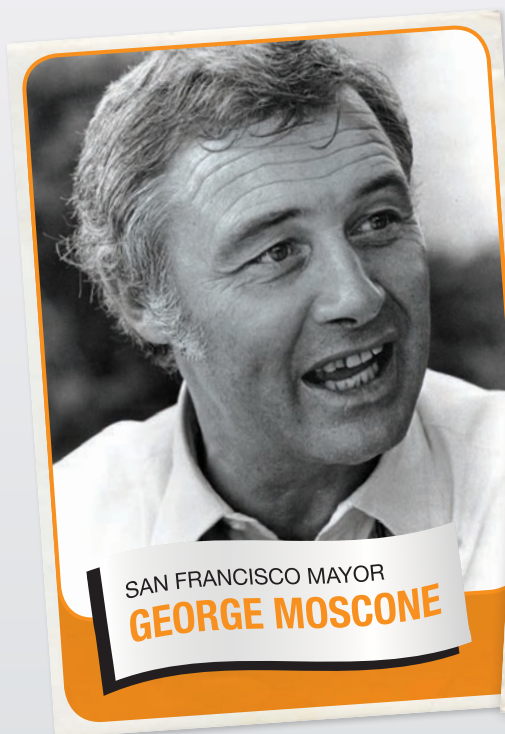
As for its initially disputed location—now known locally as South of Market Street, or SoMa—today's visitors would be hard-pressed to imagine the neighborhood without all of its shopping, dining and cultural attractions. "We have more museums around Moscone Center than anyplace else in the city," said Shaff. "I think it's one of the finest examples of a successful community redevelopment."

REMODELED AND READY FOR THE FUTURE

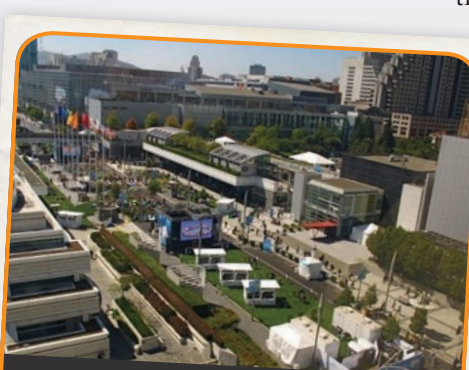
"He had white boots, a puffy shirt and only a single large amplifier," said Thom Connors, general manager of Detroit's Cobo Center, recalling the night

he saw Jimi Hendrix perform at the Cobo Arena in 1968. "It was one of the most remarkable experiences."

The once-popular arena, which was formerly home to the NBA's Detroit Pistons and host to hundreds of rock concerts before it was closed in 2009, is being reintroduced as part of a \$279 million reinvention of the center, much of which was completed by late January to welcome the North American International Auto Show



SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR
GEORGE MOSCONE



MOSCONE CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO
Opened: 1981
Total space: 1.2 million square feet

GEORGE MOSCONE

George Moscone was the mayor of San Francisco from 1976 until 1978, when he was assassinated at San Francisco City Hall along with Supervisor Harvey Milk.

opening convention buildings for business, including San Francisco's Moscone Center. "Per square foot, Moscone Center is probably the busiest convention center in the nation and one of the most sought-after destinations," said Gregg Caren, executive vice-president of convention and exhibition centers for SMG.

It's also one of its more unique from a construction angle. With two-thirds of its 1.2 million-square-foot

at the time," said Dick Shaff, Moscone Center's general manager. "It was built in what was considered a 'bad' neighborhood and displaced a lot of low-income people. There was litigation that went on for years."

San Francisco Mayor George Moscone is said to initially have had reservations about the build but eventually promoted it after city hearings. He was assassinated in 1978 in San Francisco City Hall, and

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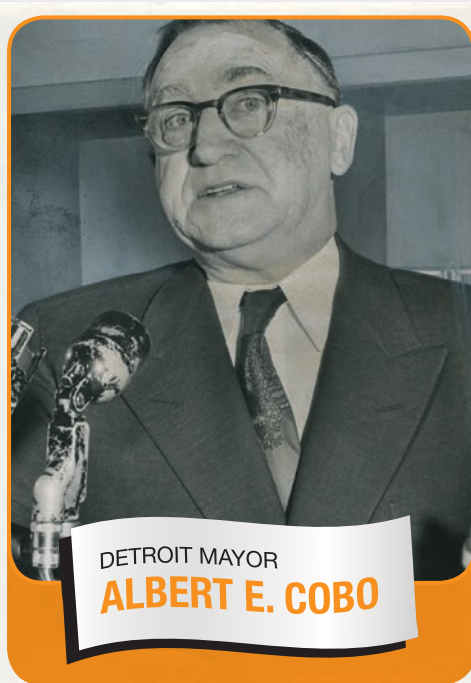
(with final touches slated for completion by June). “The transformation of Cobo Arena is one of the most important parts of our renovation, because normally there are no second acts for arenas—in America, we knock them down and build a new one. But Cobo Arena will now have another 50-year life,” said Connors, who is leading the reinvention project. He said the arena has been converted to a ballroom, meeting rooms, a food court and a kitchen. “The renovation has changed the whole look of the building and allowed us to get back into the top tier of convention centers.”

Part of a proposed downtown redevelopment program in the 1940s, “Cobo Hall” was a main component within a “noble plan to stir the imagination” and a “symbol of the living spirit of Detroit,” according to a soaring statement released by the planning commission at the time. That quote now hangs in a new wing of the Cobo Center near the bust of Mayor Albert Cobo, who served the city for most of the 1950s, a heyday for the region’s storied automobile industry.

“The redevelopment program took factories, warehouses and industrial buildings off the waterfront and replaced them with new modern structures and space for people to enjoy the river,” said Connors. Cobo opened in 1960 with the 43rd National Automobile Show, an event that has made Cobo Center its home ever since.

About 1,300 miles south, in Miami Beach, a very different convention center opened in 1957, and it’s about to undergo a similarly transformative overhaul: the Miami Beach Convention Center, scheduled to commence a \$500 million renovation and expansion in December. “It’s

happening on a very aggressive scale and very aggressive timetable, with work to be completed by the middle of 2018,” said Matthew Hollander, the center’s general manager.



DETROIT MAYOR
ALBERT E. COBO



COBO CENTER, DETROIT
Opened: 1960
Exhibition space: 622,250 square feet

ALBERT E. COBO

Albert E. Cobo was the mayor of Detroit from 1950 to 1957 and led a redevelopment effort that took factories off the city’s waterfront and replaced them with modern structures people could enjoy along the river.

While not as large as some of the other convention facilities in the region, the MBCC is a perennial favorite as it sits a short walk from the beach in the heart of one of the nation’s top leisure destinations. And the Art

Deco-style facility itself has a popular history, once home to the Miss Universe Pageant and now host to the annual, week-long Art Basel contemporary art exhibition.

Hollander said the “complete gut renovation” will be carried out in phases so that half of the convention center’s exhibit space (some 500,000 square feet) will remain functional during the entire process. “This is not just a new coat of paint,” he said. “Every major system is being replaced and the entire exterior is being replaced.”

The expansion is expected to create a new front entrance and include an 80,000-square-foot ballroom, meeting space and replaced or upgraded utilities and technology.

“For the age of the building, it’s in remarkably good shape—the operations team takes tremendous pride in maintaining it, and it shows,” said Hollander. “But it was designed for an era that is no longer here, and its future is very exciting.”

In the case of the Jacob K. Javits Center in New York City, keeping the center on track is not just about keeping up with the times but staying well ahead of the trends. Opened in 1986 and designed by architect I.M. Pei, the Javits Center recently completed a \$460 million renovation.

The center contributes \$1.5 billion to the local economy and supports 14,000 jobs; its unconventional steel-and-glass construction was designed to be innovative within the industry but also be viewed as a beautiful, integral structure; and its leaders aim to contribute to a sense of vitality within its neighborhood on

Manhattan’s West Side.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Major city convention centers have come a long way from the days

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LEGENDS OF THE HALL

of being just a “box with docks.” Holding a convention, meeting or sporting event amid one of the

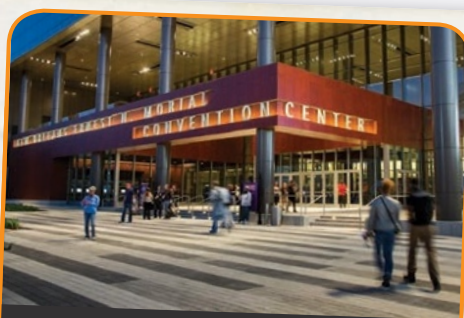
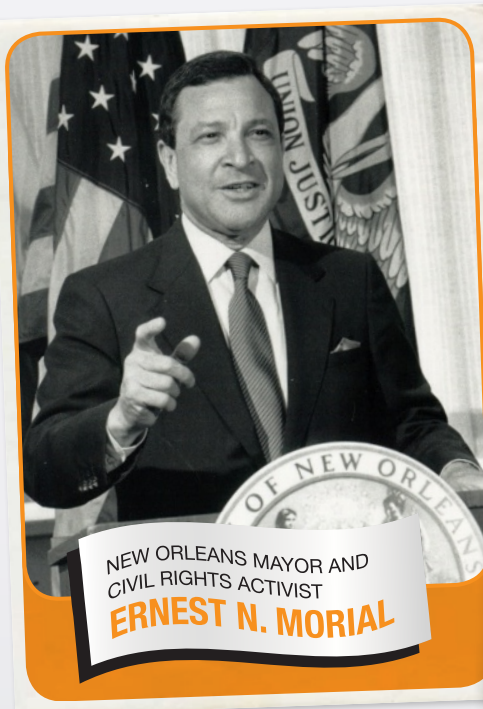
nation’s legendary centers is now a unique and enjoyable experience for attendees, planners and vendors.

These convention centers are designed to be as functional and flexible and technologically advanced as

possible, but they are also meant to inspire.

“As we look back, some of the people who envisioned the first centers realized what we all know today—that these venues are economic linchpins, and they drive commerce and tourism to their cities,” said Caren of SMG.

“If you look at the vibrancy of the hospitality industry, the communities with strong meetings markets are the ones that see continued development and growth. But at its core, it’s all still about a place for people to get together to share information, education and commerce. It’s about being in the right place for human interaction.” ■



NEW ORLEANS ERNEST N. MORIAL CONVENTION CENTER

Opened: 1984

Exhibit space: 1.1 million square feet

ERNEST N. MORIAL

Ernest N. Morial served as the mayor of New Orleans from 1978 to 1986. His son also served as the city’s mayor. The convention center was named for him in 1992.

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CSPI UPDATE

Approaching a quarter-century of uniting convention sales and DMO professionals, CSPI looks ahead to the future

In 1991, a group of convention sales professionals and destination marketing organization leaders joined together with a goal of seamlessly serving their shared clients—and learning best practices amongst themselves in the process. Such cooperation may seem second nature today. But when the organization was formed, one of its founders likened the process of uniting the groups of professionals to “getting cats and dogs together.”

Nonetheless, through the leadership of such hospitality veterans as Carroll Armstrong, the former marketing director of the San Diego Convention Center, and Bill Just, a veteran association management executive, the Association for Convention Sales and Marketing Executives (ACME) was born. In 2011, on the 20th anniversary of the group’s first annual conference, the organization changed its name to Convention Sales Professionals International (CSPI).

A TEAM APPROACH

Today, the organization represents a thriving industry of convention center sales professionals and their convention sales counterparts at DMOs across the country, each of whom play a leading and interdependent role in attracting conventions and harnessing the positive impact these large meetings have on the economic prosperity of a city or a region. CSPI remains the only association dedicated to the mutual and cooperative success of centers and DMOs. The organization advances this goal through year-round programs and events that provide numerous opportunities for continuing education, member communications and knowledge exchange between members such as monthly conference calls, professional networking and social interaction with center and DMO peers.

Nationwide, conventions and trade shows generate an estimated \$80 billion a year and rank among the top 25

industries contributing to the nation’s Gross National Product, according to the American Society of Association Executives. If conventions are big business, they are also an intensely competitive business, pursued by cities and regions nationwide. The need for convention sales and marketing professionals at centers and DMOs to be at the top of their game is critical, as is their ability to work as a team to secure bookings.

PROGRAMS FOR THE FUTURE

DMOs and convention centers share common geographic destinations whose attributes they promote as they pursue a successful destiny as convention sales partners. CSPI exists to support its members in achieving that destiny by working together to reach their organizational and career goals.

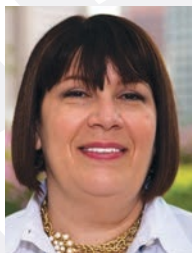
Each year, the organization expands on its programming in an effort to be the leading source of information to this industry. In 2013, CSPI launched the Seal of Approval program, an effort that allows convention centers and DMOs to prove their compatibility and teamwork by seeking recognition in four areas that result in the award of the seal: DMO/convention center sales; accountability, advocacy and finances; technology and training; and conflict resolution. Centers and DMOs jointly apply for and, upon approval, are awarded the Seal of Approval. The program is based on the Best Practices for Convention Center Sales and Convention Center Operations white paper released by DMAI and IAAM in 2007. Through an extensive application and review process, candidates document their success in the integration of their sales and service operations to create a seamless experience for the customer.

For more information about CSPI and its educational programs, visit cspionline.org or call (609) 269-2461. ■



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CSPI VENUES & DESTINATIONS

List of member organizations, as of February 12, 2015, provided by Convention Sales Professionals International.

Baltimore Convention Center

bccenter.org

CenturyLink Center Omaha

centurylinkcenteromaha.com

Charlotte Convention Center

charlotteconventionctr.com

Cleveland Convention Center

clevcc.com

Connecticut Convention Center

ctconventions.com

Destination DC

washington.org

Duluth Entertainment Convention Center

decc.org

Georgia International Convention Center

gicc.com

Greater Columbus Convention Center

columbusconventions.com

Greater Des Moines CVB

catchdesmoines.com

Greater Ft. Lauderdale CVB

sunny.org

Greater Green Bay**Convention & Visitors Bureau**

greenbay.com

Greater Madison**Convention & Visitors Bureau**

visitmadison.com

Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau

visithampton.com

Hampton Roads Convention Center

thehrcc.com

Indiana Convention Center &**Lucas Oil Stadium**

icclos.com

Kentucky International**Convention Center**

kyconvention.org

Lakeland Center

thelakelandcenter.com

Lansing Center

lansingcenter.com

Louisville Convention &**Visitors Bureau**

gotolouisville.com

Meet Minneapolis

minneapolis.org

Ocean Center

oceancenter.com

Ocean City Convention & Visitors Bureau

ococean.com

Oklahoma City Convention &**Visitors Bureau**

visitokc.com

Omaha Convention & Visitors Bureau

visitomaha.com

Orange County Convention Center

occc.net

Oregon Convention Center

oregoncc.org

Pennsylvania Convention**Center Authority**

paconvention.com

Phoenix Convention Center

phoenixconventioncenter.com

Rhode Island Convention Center

riconvention.com

Saint Paul RiverCentre

rivercentre.org

Sioux Falls Convention &**Visitors Bureau**

visitsiouxfalls.com

Spokane Convention Center &**INB Performing Arts Center**

spokanecenter.com

Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau

visitsyracuse.org

Tampa Convention Center

tampaconventioncenter.com

Travel Portland

travelportland.com

Visit Baltimore

baltimore.org

Visit Charlotte

charlottesgotalot.com

Visit Cheyenne

cheyenne.org

Visit Saint Paul

visitsaintpaul.com

Visit Spokane

visitspokane.com

Visit Tampa Bay

visittampabay.com

Washington State Convention Center

wsc.com

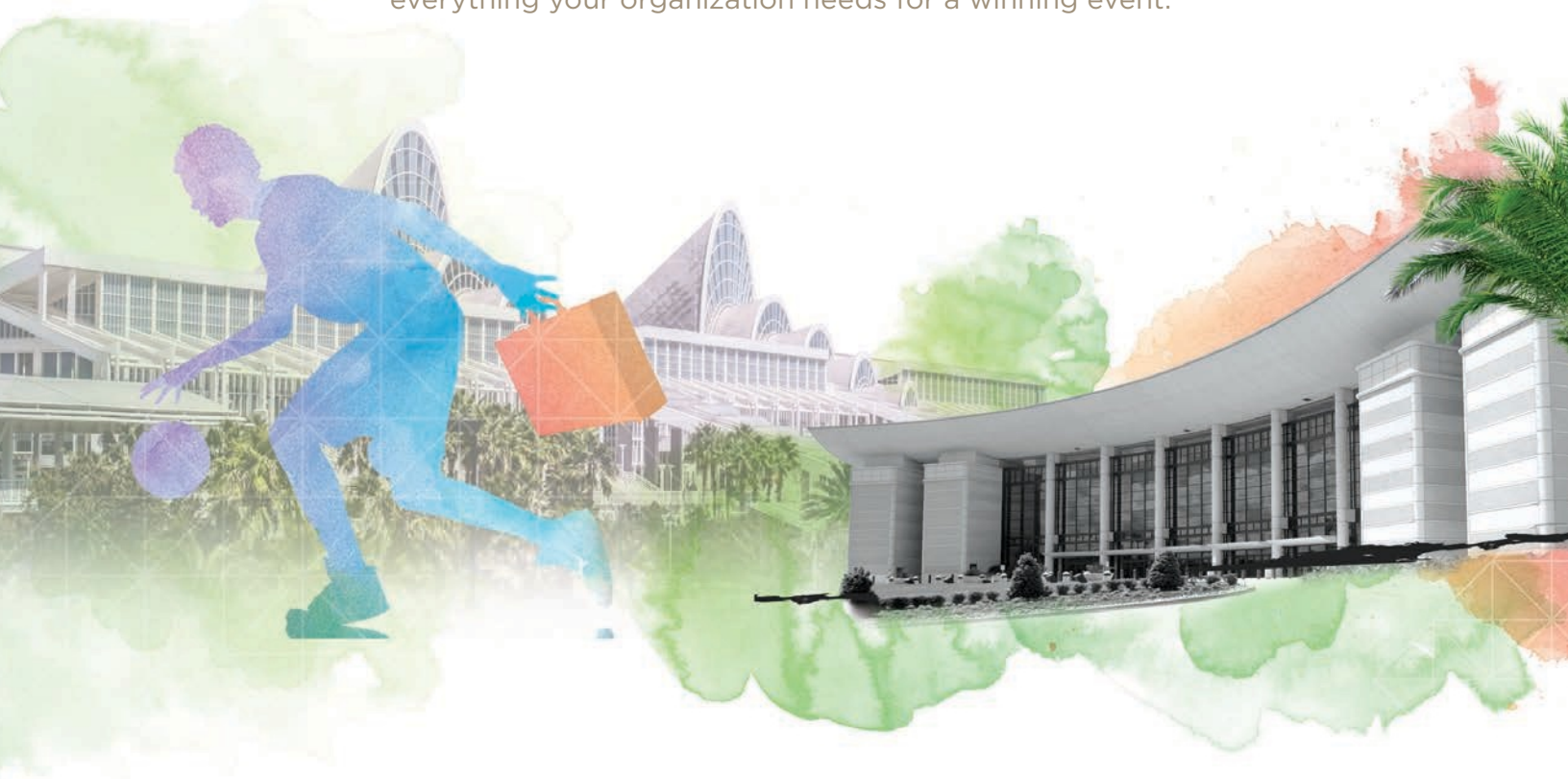
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