In our competitive global economy, we all must strive to do our very best if we want to succeed and thrive. I think this is particularly true in the meeting, incentive and hospitality industries. It isn’t acceptable to rest on laurels of past accomplishments. It is necessary – and even expected – that we top our previous endeavors, and/or enhance our already impressive services or facilities.

In short, we should never settle for just being “good.” We constantly need to strive to be “great.”

But what does that mean?

**Reach For New Heights**

In our exciting industry, where we are in the “experience business,” there always seems to be a way to improve. This doesn’t mean that anything was wrong with the prior meeting or venue. It may have been just as was planned. But that still leaves “opportunity” to improve. With a passion for excellence, it is admirable to challenge our achievement levels with each program conducted or hosted.

So, how is this achieved for meetings and incentive travel programs?

Start with the basics. Effectively communicate with your specific (and varied) audiences, and address their particular needs. Be sure to note that different audiences (and generations) may respond in dissimilar ways, so take this into consideration when choosing the mode and manner of communication, with tailored messages. And if you are not creative, then you may be boring.

Also, collaborate with colleagues and attendees on ways to enrich future programs. Take advantage of helpful and effective resources, such as your trusted Global Sales Organization (GSO) contacts that advocate for your interests.

For the “best of the best” venues, an easy way to identify these is via ALHI’s “Level 5 Collection.” Each has achieved the industry’s highest and most celebrated honors, and there is an impressive variety of options from which to choose.

For the meeting content, make sure you are providing meaningful topics, presented concisely. Looking to the example of the very successful TED Conferences – presented in 18 minutes or less – can serve as inspiration for maximizing your attendees’ time, while maintaining attendee attention. Information in today’s rapidly moving society is often best-received in a fast, direct, dynamic, fact-based format that gets to the point and does not waste the audience’s time. Or, worse yet, becomes boring. After all, length does not beat content.

With that said, be sure that you also provide some “white space” on the agenda (i.e. not “overstuffed”), so that participants are able to establish a camaraderie with others, take advantage of the offerings at the distinguished venue, and make fond, lasting memories of their experience.

While it can be easy to settle for the status quo of “last year’s program,” it is much more rewarding to strive for greatness. I’m very proud to be part of an industry that always reaches for, and achieves, new heights, and is so creative. It definitely isn’t boring to watch (and help) so many fantastic programs reach their targets and evolve into “Best Ever” year-after-year!
With the growth in program attendees’ expectations for an “experience” with their meetings and conventions beyond just content, it is evident that memorable events are the new norm.

In a nutshell: the “Experience Economy” is not only back, but it has been raised even higher than it was before the recession – and it is as compelling as ever!

So what are some of the hot trends that are occurring in Destination Management Company (DMC) services?

According to Catherine Chaulet, president of Global DMC Partners – a trusted and valued Member of ALHI’s Global Luxury Alliance, which provides outstanding DMC services in 100 destinations worldwide – one of the hottest trends they’ve been seeing across the board is incorporating healthy living into meetings and events.

“Shabby chic is so ‘in’ these days!” said Catherine.

She also reports that “some sort of surprise element is big (at events), especially when it involves the venue itself. Our DMCs have used projection mapping, or video mapping, to turn spaces into display surfaces for video. With just a few clicks, a hotel ballroom or blank warehouse can be transformed into an underground speakeasy or an elegant opera house. Or pop-up street markets with local vendors and pop-up fashion markets, like blue jeans or sunglasses bars, can surprise guests and make them feel fully immersed in the destination to experience the local culture.”

Catherine added, “If the event doesn’t allow time for your attendees to get out to shop or dine, bring both to them!”

**Strength of the Economy**

Another trend that we at ALHI have been seeing is that the strength of the U.S. economy and the U.S. dollar is enabling companies and organizations to spend more on distinctive experiences, and they are utilizing DMCs to do so.

Note that this does not mean the event needs to be extravagant. But providing memorable experiences in an environment that is motivating, compelling and unique (domestically and/or abroad), actually increases your ROI. And all of this can be accomplished while protecting your budget as well.

Now, for example, is a great time for groups to experience Europe to take advantage of the increased buying power of the U.S. currency, as the U.S. dollar has strengthened 26% against the Euro over the past five years, and 21% versus the Euro since 2013.

Utilizing a DMC that provides skilled, local expertise and can incorporate unique experiences that reflect the destination and local culture is a cost-effective way to accomplish the program’s objectives while providing truly memorable experiences.

Along with the strength of the dollar, we’ve seen that the improving U.S. economy also is enabling groups to expand the number of attendees, particularly for meetings, conventions and programs within the U.S. A win-win for all – the organization, attendees and the venue!

**CSR Programs**

Another trend that continues to grow is incorporating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) events into programs – for which DMCs can provide suggestions pertinent to the area and can help coordinate. This can range from incorporating a Clean The World event to help recycle soap for distribution to impoverished people, to planting trees in the community, to food drives for the homeless, to hosting a “lip sync” contest where every vote costs $1 to benefit a designated charity.

If properly coordinated, with key executives on board and participating, the CSR event often is the most memorable part of the program for attendees.

To find out more about the many services, hot trends and unique options available, contact your ALHI GSO for trusted DMC providers.
LA CANtera RESORT & SPA
Discover an Elevated Meeting Experience in the Texas Hill Country

Prepare for an experience that is sophisticated yet entirely relaxed. Comfortable yet filled with opportunities to discover something new. Set on 550 acres atop one of the highest points in San Antonio, the 496-room La Cantera Resort & Spa delivers the authentic flavor of the Texas Hill Country plus the best of San Antonio shopping, dining and attractions – all just 20 minutes from San Antonio International Airport.

ALHI Luxury on Sale™
Book your next group at La Cantera Resort & Spa and choose five of these fantastic perks for your program:

- 115,000 square feet of newly renovated event space
- 28 indoor meeting spaces
- Onsite audiovisual professionals
- Personal meeting concierge
- 496 guest rooms (including 32 suites)
- 2 championship golf courses
- 9 restaurants and bars
- 5 sparkling pools
- New luxury spa
- Located just 20 minutes from San Antonio International Airport

Testimonials
“We held our 2016 Shareholder Retreat at the La Cantera Resort in early June and had our best conference ever! All our members and guests raved about the beautiful setting and views, their upscale rooms, the meeting facilities and especially the food at our receptions and meal events. The events staff was great to work with and constantly came by to check on us. We had already booked La Cantera for our 2017 Retreat, and now our attendees are excited about coming back next year!”

Chuck Waters
Director of Marketing
Communications & Member Services
American Pharmacies

Requirements: 2 night minimum, 25-50 rooms on peak nights, rates starting at $209, bookings to be consumed from July 2016 through June 2017. **Promotion Valid until September 30, 2016**

For more information on La Cantera Resort & Spa, visit ALHI.com/LaCantera
FEATURING ALHI MEMBER DESTIN, FLORIDA

THE HENDERSON
A Salamander Beach & Spa Resort
Introducing the finest Gulf Coast hotel in a generation.

The Henderson is located along one of America’s top beaches in Destin, Florida, and adjacent to the pristine 208-acre Henderson Beach State Park. Reminiscent of a luxurious grand seaside manor of yesteryear, the resort centers around The Henderson hotel, which features 170 spacious guest rooms and suites, a nature-inspired Salamander spa. Gulf-to-table cuisine, a dedicated Conference Center wing with 10,000 sq. ft. of flexible indoor meeting space and 20,000 sq. ft. of beautiful outdoor event space.

Testimonials

“This is one of the most exciting luxury beachfront resorts to open in the United States in years. The Henderson is poised to become one of the most sought-after group and wedding destinations in the country because of its unique setting, genuinely warm and friendly staff, accessibility and array of activities.”

Prem Devadas, President of Salamander Hotels & Resorts

“This is one of the finest Gulf Coast resorts to open in many years. The Henderson is sure to be a true game changer on many levels for Destin. We have arrived.”

Scott Russell, Partner
Russell & Russell Consulting, LLC

Fast Facts

- Newest addition to Salamander Hotels & Resorts
- Two miles of sugar-sand beach
- Adjacent to pristine Henderson Beach State Park
- 170 spacious guest rooms and suites
- Panoramic views of the Gulf, pool, scenic Crystal Beach or garden piazza
- Nearly 30,000 sq. ft. of indoor/outdoor group options including: ballrooms, lush lawns, pool decks, and a rooftop terrace
- Dedicated meeting wing
- Luxurious 5,221-sq.-ft. Grand Ballroom
- 1,254-sq.-ft. Junior Ballroom
- 1,000-sq.-ft. Hospitality Suite
- Private dining room exclusively for group luncheons
- Valet parking
- Five-star level service
- Private beach access
- Salamander spa with 11 treatment rooms
- 4 restaurants (Gulf view fine dining) & 4 bars/lounges
- 2 swimming pools & 3 decks
- 2 gardens
- Fitness Center
- Beach service & sunset beverage service
- Concierge service
- Twice daily housekeeping

ALHI Luxury on Sale™

“Be the First” Group Package is a special introductory group offer with rates from $165 per night plus a complimentary Welcome Reception.

Mention “New” when booking for the best package rates. Valid for new bookings for stays between December 7, 2016 and March 10, 2017. Based on availability. Black-out dates and stay restrictions may apply. Taxes and fees are additional.

For more information on The Henderson, visit ALHI.com/TheHenderson
GRAND FIESTA AMERICANA CORAL BEACH CANCÚN

Unparalleled Oceanfront Luxury

Nestled on Cancún’s finest stretch of private beach, this iconic resort offers guests the best of both worlds; award-winning luxury that transports the soul to pure relaxation, and a central location that is just steps away from Cancún’s vibrant culture and entertainment. All 602 suites offer spacious comfort and feature breathtaking ocean views, bringing glimpses of sea and sand at every turn. Décor is warm yet refined, naturally complementing the setting.

Testimonials

“In February, Thrivent Financial experienced the highest-rated conference we have ever had for our annual leadership conference. It was due in large part to the Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach property, staff, culinary team and production support team. When we come back, will look no further than this amazing resort, again.”

Dan Young,
Director of Event Planning & Recognition
Thrivent Financial

Things To Do

Take a break while you’re here experiencing “The Coral Living”

- Visit the award-winning Gem Spa and treat yourself to a roster of soothing massages and signature body treatments for both men and women.
- Workout in the large Fitness Center offering cutting-edge equipment along with stunning ocean views.
- Look into the assortment of motorized and non-motorized water activities you’ll find for the whole family at the Coral Beach Marina.
- Book a table at La Joya Restaurant for the typical Noche Mexicana and embark on a culinary journey.

Whether you’re visiting Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach for work or for play, you’ll feel motivated - and rewarded just by being here.

For more information on Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach visit ALHI.com/GrandFiestaAmericanaCoralBeach

Fast Facts

- Award-winning meetings and special events team
- Over 86,000 sq. ft. of indoor and outdoor meeting space
- Meeting accommodations for groups from 10 to 1,700
- A lavish 15,351-sq.-ft. Grand Coral Ballroom
- 21 Breakout Rooms
- Two 5,400-sq.-ft. Presidential Suites
- State-of-the-art Business Center
- In-house audiovisual
- WiFi available throughout the resort

Nestled on Cancún’s finest stretch of private beach, this iconic resort offers guests the best of both worlds; award-winning luxury that transports the soul to pure relaxation, and a central location that is just steps away from Cancún’s vibrant culture and entertainment. All 602 suites offer spacious comfort and feature breathtaking ocean views, bringing glimpses of sea and sand at every turn. Décor is warm yet refined, naturally complementing the setting.
**NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA**

**ROYAL SONESTA NEW ORLEANS**

We’re All Jazzed Up and Newly Re-Imagined!

The AAA Four Diamond-rated Royal Sonesta New Orleans personifies luxury, providing guests the heritage of New Orleans hospitality through graceful ambiance and uncompromising service in the French Quarter. With 483 newly renovated guest rooms, its Food is Art catering philosophy, and services that ensure an efficient, stimulating environment for meetings, no one offers more ways to inspire its valued guests than the all-new Royal Sonesta New Orleans.

**Fast Facts**

- 483 newly renovated guest rooms, including 36 suites and 58 R Club Concierge Level rooms
- 20,000 sq. ft. of event space, including a 5,000-sq.-ft. ballroom and 20 meeting rooms with windows and access to outdoor venues, like our 3,400-sq.-ft. courtyard
- Unique hospitality events with Bourbon Balcony Suites
- 5 onsite dining and entertainment options

**ALHI Luxury on Sale™**

Executive Summer Meetings Package:

- Upgrade the group with a VIP experience to Premium Guest Rooms from $169 per night, or Deluxe Rooms from $139 per night
- 5% off the Master Bill
- Complimentary cocktail during Happy Hour (Monday-Friday, 5pm-7pm in Irvin Mayfield’s Jazz Playhouse for each of your attendees)
- Complimentary upgraded premium WiFi

*Certain restrictions apply. Offer is based on availability and applies only to new meetings staying mid-week (Sunday-Thursday) now to December 30, 2016. Book by August 15, 2016. Playhouse cocktail $12 maximum value. 5% instant rebate will be applied to Qualifying Charges on the total final pre-tax Master Bill once program is actualized. Rebate will be issued in the form of a credit on the total final pre-tax Master Bill. “Qualifying Charges” must appear on the Master Bill.

**For more information on Royal Sonesta New Orleans visitALHI.com/RoyalSonestaNewOrleans**

**ORLANDO, FLORIDA**

**ROSEN SHINGLE CREEK**

10 years of meetings is cause for celebration and Planner Perks.

At the headwaters of the Everglades, the AAA Four Diamond Rosen Shingle Creek honors the natural world. Inspired by 1900s Spanish Revival-style architecture, the hotel is set on 230 lush acres, featuring 1,501 elegant guest rooms and suites, each with exquisite views. Ranked a top 25 U.S. meeting hotel by Cvent, the property features 490,000 sq. ft. of state-of-the-art meeting and event space, including a 95,000-sq.-ft., column-free ballroom. Add easy access to International Drive, Orlando’s iconic attractions and the Orlando International Airport for an unequalled meeting experience.

**Fast Facts**

- 1,501 luxurious guest rooms, including 191 suites
- 490,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting and event space
- 15 restaurant and lounge options
- The Spa at Shingle Creek, 13,000 sq. ft. with 9 treatment rooms
- Four heated swimming pools
- Complimentary WiFi in guest rooms and public areas
- RFID guest room key locking system with automatic deadbolts
- No resort fee

**ALHI Luxury on Sale™**

**Rosen Shingle Creek 10-Year Anniversary Planner Perks**

Book and consume by December 24, 2016 and choose one special offer from below, based on your program size and date availability.

- 10% discount on catering F&B, spa, golf merchandise, and select restaurants
- Complimentary basic WiFi (guest rooms/public areas/meeting rooms/pre-function areas)
- 10% discount on pre-ordered IT services
- 20% discount on in-house audiovisual services
- And more

There is limited availability, so ask for our Rosen Shingle Creek hot dates now through December 24, 2016. Offer based on date, space and rate availability. Subject to change. NEW business only. Not valid with any other discounts or promotions. Must mention promo code: RSCANNIV. All discounts/credits exclude tax, service charge, gratuity, spa packages, rigging, electrical, golf online purchases and spa merchandise. Discounts on IT, audiovisual and exhibition services are on pre-ordered items only. Transportation is scheduled to Universal, SeaWorld and Aquatica by reservation only for individual guests for pre/post stays.

**For more information on Rosen Shingle Creek visit ALHI.com/RosenShingleCreek**
BELLAGIO
Meetings are adorned in luxury at Bellagio Las Vegas.

An iconic destination. An iconic city. Together, they make for a meeting that’s unlike anything else. But when that destination is celebrated for not only its grandeur, but also its unmistakable charm and unparalleled customer service, a meeting becomes elevated to something much more experiential.

Fast Facts
• Bellagio is a AAA Five Diamond Award winner 15 consecutive years (2002 – 2016); the first Las Vegas hotel casino and the largest resort in AAA history to receive the honor; the only hotel in the United States from 2004 – 2016 with two AAA Five Diamond restaurants
• Wholly owned subsidiary of MGM Resorts International (NYSE: MGM)
• 3,933 guest rooms including 512 suites
• From fine dining to quick service, Bellagio boasts over 16 restaurants to satisfy any culinary desire
• Five outdoor pools, four spas and 52 private cabanas; Mediterranean courtyard setting
• More than 200,000 sq. ft. of meeting and convention facilities
  ~ 45,458-sq. ft. Grand Ballroom
  ~ 30,800-sq. ft. Tower Ballroom
  ~ 22,052-sq. ft. Bellagio Ballroom
  ~ Tuscany Kitchen® – first exhibition kitchen of its kind in Las Vegas
  ~ 50 meeting rooms, 1,000 – 45,458 sq. ft. including ballrooms
  ~ Can accommodate intimate gatherings or convention groups of more than 5,500

Testimonial
“When choosing the Bellagio, we get a destination within a destination and a staff that executes flawlessly every time. It simplifies my job knowing that their partnership seamlessly delivers on the goals I have for my clients without worry or uncertainty.”
Scott Young
The Meeting Company

For more information on Bellagio visit ALHI.com/Bellagio
RESTAURANT BRIEFS

NEW CULINARY DISCOVERIES...

New York, NY – Porter House New York

Under the direction of acclaimed Chef Michael Lomonaco, a frequent guest on “The Today Show” and a guest host on ABC’s “The Chew,” this restaurant has it all. Featuring a great location on the fourth floor of Time Warner Center (just steps from Lincoln Center, and providing sweeping views of Central Park and the Manhattan skyline), it also serves terrific cuisine in a very elegant setting. Specializing in dry-aged Prime Beef, the restaurant offers a nice variety of other dishes too, and features an impressive wine cellar with more than 650 labels. Appealing dinner entée options include the mouth-watering Filet Mignon, Butter Poached Two-Pound Lobster, Faroe Islands Salmon, Colorado Lamb T-Bones, and Imperial Wagyu Beef NY Strip Steak. I suggest pairing the meal with the Black Truffle Mashed Potatoes and features two private dining rooms that can each seat up to 25 guests, or together can accommodate up to 85 guests for a cocktail reception.

(212) 823-9500
Porterhousenewyork.com

Ponte Vedra Beach, FL – The Golf Club Restaurant

If you ever have the chance to play golf in Ponte Vedra, recognized as one of the golf capitals on the East Coast, do not miss the opportunity. Options include the renowned Stadium Course, which recently hosted THE PLAYERS Championship Tournament, as well as the two fine courses at the AAA Five Diamond oceanfront Ponte Vedra Inn & Club. The latter includes the lushly landscaped Lagoon Course. While there, be sure to dine at The Golf Club Restaurant, which overlooks the picturesque “island” hole. Open daily for lunch, and on Fridays and Saturdays for dinner, the restaurant features an inviting casual atmosphere. I recommend starting with the Florida Salad (which has tasty Orange sections, Berries and Walnuts). Delicious! Entrées include Bourbon Barrel Brined Pork Chop, Pan Seared Snapper, and Chicken Breast Milano. I opted for the latter, which was very flavorful. Then, enjoy a stay at the resort or at its graceful sister property, The Lodge & Club, offering panoramic Atlantic views.

(888) 839-9145
PonteVedra.com/dining

Geneva, Switzerland – Le Grill

Looking for a fabulous dining experience in the incredible city of Geneva? Then look no further than Le Grill, which provides breathtaking views of Lake Geneva and the spectacular French Alps. Located at the exquisite 5-Star Grand Hotel Kempinski Geneva, which is a lavish haven in the heart of the city, this restaurant is one to put on your “must do” list. Boasting an open-style kitchen and stylish décor, this jewel of a restaurant serves such enticing options as: Home-Smoked Salmon, Angus Beef Sirloin Steak Burger (served with Bacon, Oyster Mushrooms and homemade Herb Mayonnaise), Veal Cutlet, Crab Cakes, and Tuna Steak. So many appealing options that it is hard to choose! Be sure to save room for one of the tempting desserts, which can include Lemon Meringue Pie (my favorite), Chocolate Molten Cake, and Tart of the Day. A truly memorable meal in an unforgettable location.

011 + 41 (0) 22 908 92 20
kempinski.com/en/geneva/grand-hotel-geneva

FAQs

Q: Does ALHI have any Member hotels or resorts that feature an auditorium?

A: Yes! ALHI’s membership includes an impressive array of luxury-level hotels and resorts which feature an auditorium. Appealing options in the East U.S. include Foxwoods Resort Casino (Mashantucket, CT), Seaport Hotel & World Trade Center (Boston), Lansdowne Resort (Leesburg, VA), Stowe Mountain Lodge (Stowe, VT), and Mohegan Sun (Uncasville, CT). Choices in the South include Château Elan (Braselton, GA), The Biltmore (Miami, FL), Belmond Charleston Place (Charleston, SC), Ocean Reef Club (Key Largo, FL), and PGA National Resort & Spa (Palm Beach Gardens, FL). Midwest and West options include AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center (Austin, TX), Bacara Resort & Spa (Santa Barbara, CA), Resort at Squaw Creek (Lake Tahoe, CA), and The Mirage (Las Vegas). International choices include LIVE Aqua Cancún Resort (Cancún, Mexico). What a terrific variety of options from which to choose!

Q: Does ALHI have any Member hotels or resorts that are newly opened or opening soon?

A: Yes! We have five outstanding hotels which just opened or will soon open. San Clemente Palace Kempinski Venice just reopened in Venice, Italy in March on a picturesque 17-acre private island, and features 190 majestically appointed guest rooms and 9,000 sq. ft. of meeting space. Paséa Hotel & Spa, overlooking the Pacific, just opened at the end of May in Huntington Beach in Southern California, with 250 spacious guest rooms and 34,600 sq. ft. of meeting space. The Watergate Hotel, which just opened at the beginning of June in Washington, D.C., upon the completion of a comprehensive $125 million repositioning of the entire hotel, features 336 luxury guest rooms and 27,000 sq. ft. of meeting space. The Caribbean-themed Loews Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Orlando, opening this July in Orlando, will offer 1,000 guest rooms and 115,000 sq. ft. of versatile meeting space. The stylish resort, The Henderson, opening November 1, 2016 in picturesque Destin in Northwest Florida, will boast 170 guest rooms and 40,000 sq. ft. of meeting and event space.

Contact your nearest ALHI Global Sales professional for information on these outstanding new hotels.

Thanks for asking!

David G. Gabri, Chief Executive Officer

ALHI OFFERS 52 5-DIAMOND/STAR QUALITY HOTELS & RESORTS IN OUR LEVEL 5 COLLECTION. VISIT ALHI.COM/LEVEL5

For 30 years Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI) has been providing corporations and organizations reliable, regionally based Global Sales services for their meeting and incentive programs with our Membership of over 250 luxury level hotels and resorts, plus an alliance of 23 luxury cruise ships and DMCs in over 100 destinations worldwide.

Visit ALHI.com and contact your local ALHI Sales Professional or call our Luxury Group Desk at 866-303-2544.

ALHI ASSOCIATED LUXURY HOTELS INTERNATIONAL ALHI.COM