

WELCOME

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!

We've all heard this phrase so many times. Location is a key factor in site selection.

In the coming months, there may be labor actions that curtail the success of meetings at several Boston hotels including the Westin Copley, Westin Waterfront, Park Plaza, and Sheraton Boston as well as the Crown Plaza hotel in Secaucus, New Jersey.

Simplify your site selection process and avoid labor disputes by contacting a member of the INMEX staff. INMEX is committed to providing up-to-date information on labor disputes and assisting you in finding a vetted location for your meeting.

We are always eager to hear from you, so keep the queries coming!

—Catherine Kihara
Strategic Initiatives Liaison

Boston Union Takes Strike Vote at Starwood Properties

On March 14, the employees at Starwood's four Boston properties voted to authorize a strike or boycott at their hotels, with 1,013 members in favor and only 27 opposed. Employees are currently working without a contract at three of these facilities, while the contract covering employees at the Westin Copley expires on March 31, 2007.

It is possible that workers at all four properties could be on strike, holding picket lines, and/or calling for a boycott as early as April 1.

The union began negotiating with the Boston hotels during the fall of 2006. The citywide master contract for most Boston hotels was set to expire on November 30, 2006. It was extended until February 1, 2007, but then expired.

The potential for disruption exists only at the Starwood properties, because agreements (called "me-too" agreements) have been reached at all the other Boston hotels represented by UNITE HERE. According to these agreements, management at the other hotels has agreed to accept whatever terms are reached at the Sheraton. The union has in turn agreed to avoid labor disputes at these other properties, which include the Fairmont Copley Plaza, Omni Parker House, Lenox, Logan Hilton, and others.

Planners may also want to consider the Convention Center and surrounding hotels in Providence, RI, which is a short 30 minutes south of Boston.

The Boston dispute is centering around health care, housekeeper workloads, and programs to support the hiring of African-American workers.

The day after the strike vote, the Boston Globe reported: "Unite HERE Local 26 president Janice Loux took me into a room where charts detailing strike



plans lined the walls. Workers will receive \$200 a week during a strike she said; they will be expected to pull shifts on the picket line or to perform other duties such as making meals for those on the lines. If the strike vote is just a bluff, a great deal of planning seems to have gone into it ... The union is urging companies to stop putting employees and guests up at the hotels if the labor issue is not resolved soon ... An actual strike, which has become a rarity here, seemed like a very real possibility yesterday. The union's members said the work they do is wearing them out, and they seemed very tired of Starwood, too."

Your group may be able to limit its exposure to penalties or damages if you act sooner rather than later. Please contact your INMEX representative, or Catherine Kihara (202-661-3667), if you have an event scheduled in Boston later this year and would like recommendations for next steps to protect the integrity of your event.

Best Practices for Meeting and Event Email Marketing

By *Kate Slonaker*

Effective email marketing campaigns result in successful meetings and events. Organizations of every size should make an effort to connect in a meaningful way with event attendees. Your outreach efforts will not only increase event attendance but will also promote brand awareness, customer/employee loyalty, and increase invitation response time. Email marketing is the most practical way to effectively connect with your constituents while alleviating the strain on your time and resources.

Here are a few ways to strengthen meeting and event performance through email marketing:

Monitor Campaigns: How many emails were delivered? How many invitees opened the email? How many people have registered? Tracking the answers to these questions and other key campaign metrics will provide insight into your event marketing performance and allow you to provide additional support to less popular events and meetings.

Use Targeted Messages: Distinct groups of event attendees call for different messaging.

Segment your groups, tailor your communications, and personalize each message. Delivering applicable content to each type of registrant dramatically boosts response rates.

Viral Marketing: Are your event registrants able to forward your messages to other interested parties? Facilitating viral marketing takes the power of word of mouth online. Let your invitees boost your event attendance by utilizing this feature in your online registration system.

Technology can assist you by streamlining the range of event marketing tasks. Online tools such as Cvent's Event Management system can handle online registration, travel, housing, budgets, and email marketing in one integrated interface. Today's planner should take advantage of advanced solutions in order to market internal and external meetings and events in the most efficient way.

Kate Slonaker manages over 400 events per year for Cvent, the leader in online event management solutions for event planners. Kate can be reached at kslonaker@cvent.com.

Participate in the INMEX Survey!

Take part in the 2007 TOP 5 EVENT EXPERIENCES survey.

Tell us the five best cities, downtown hotels and resort destinations to host a meeting, event or convention!

Let us know about the best experience you had while planning or holding an event in 2006!

Visit www.inmex.org and click on the survey link.

Thank you for participating and helping INMEX to better serve our subscribers!

• SUBSCRIBERS CORNER •

Since its inception, INMEX has assisted in planning, selecting sites, and negotiating contracts for 37 events with:

- Over 20,000 attendees
- More than 16,000 room nights
- Nearly \$2.1 million in hotel room revenue

Get on board and experience INMEX!

THE INMEX EXPERIENCE

by Anne Pernick, Business Ethics Network

I contacted INMEX late last year for help with our 2007 Business Ethics Network (BEN) Conference, coming up in mid-October. A Teamster who is a member of BEN suggested I approach INMEX for help finding and negotiating with a union hotel for the event. BEN members are corporate campaign activists around the country and outside the US. BEN's mission is to help transform the role of corporations in society by building the capacity of our members. We need to find a conference setting and accommodations that reflect the labor, environmental, and human rights values BEN and our members are fighting for.

Working on our behalf at INMEX is Catherine Kihara, who has been thorough, creative, and patient on this project.

We timed the BEN Conference for peak season in the San Francisco Bay Area, and hotel space is at a premium. When it became clear we also needed to consider community centers for meeting space, Catherine started searching for union hotels and caterers near these sites without skipping a beat.

As I write this we are deciding between several great options. All this for the price of a free subscription—we are thrilled to be working with Catherine and INMEX and will continue to do so.

Anne Pernick is the Coordinator of the

Business Ethics NETWORK

a project of Corporate Ethics International. Please contact her at apernick@corporateethics.org or 503-478-0892.

For more information on BEN, our free membership, and our conference, go to: www.businessethicsnetwork.org

Protracted Fight at Secaucus, NJ Crown Plaza Hotel

When the owners of the Crowne Plaza hotel in Secaucus, NJ left the bargaining table and refused to negotiate with workers, UNITE HERE Local 96 declared a boycott of the hotel. The Crowne Plaza is owned by the Rosdev Group, and the union is boycotting several other hotels owned by the company including the Hartford Crowne Plaza (pictured) and several hotels in Quebec.

Rosdev's operating practices do not live up to INMEX standards.

Workers and community members have been picketing and leafleting outside of the Secaucus hotel on a frequent basis.

INMEX advises planners to contact a member of the INMEX staff before planning a meeting in any of the boycotted hotels mentioned above.



Marriott Changes Rules on Third Parties

Late last year, Marriott announced a move to streamline and centralize its payment process to third party planners. What's more, Marriott is requiring that independent planners register with the International Airlines Travel Agent Network (IATAN) in order to collect their commissions. To register with IATAN, planners may be charged fees, and may be asked to submit proof of liability insurance in some circumstances.

As was reported in the trade publication Meeting News in December of 2006, the move is being implemented as of June of 2007. Thus far, Marriott is the only major hotel operator that will require third parties to register with IATAN.

INMEX will be monitoring how this move will affect our subscribers and its ramifications on the industry throughout the year.

ADVERTISE IN INMEX NEWS! CALL CATHERINE KIHARA AT 202-661-3667.

*Check out the new and improved
INMEX website! www.inmex.org*

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