

Meeting Planners Need Cost-Saving Options in 2008

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More than 75 percent of meeting planners attending the 8th Annual Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International's (HSMAI) Affordable Meetings(R) Mid-America Conference & Exhibition April 9 - 10, 2008, at Chicago's Navy Pier, stated planning budgets remain the same for 2008, despite media coverage of an economic recession.

Even though the slumping economy may not impact budgets, planners still feel a need for cost-saving options, according to the conference's pre-survey.

In their responses, planners cited that they have more meetings to plan, an increase in responsibility, an expansion of their roles, and a need to accomplish more with the same budget.

'Most meeting planners coming to this show aren't attending other industry shows,' said Robert A. Gilbert, CHME, CHA, president and CEO of HSMAI. "Affordable Meetings provides a one stop shop where planners can connect with vendors to do business for the coming year, while taking advantage of seminars and workshops designed to educate planners on making the most of their budgets."

HSMAI's Affordable Meetings remains a top conference for meeting planners as they look for cost-saving advice as they go about their day-to-day responsibilities. 72.6 percent of attendees responded that they do not conduct business at any other industry show.

At the conference, a majority of planners will seek hotel and resort (75.3 percent) or venue (60 percent) options. Others are in need of promotional items (58.8 percent), audio-visual services (50 percent) and meeting technologies (35.3 percent).

'The Affordable Meetings pre-survey provides us with current information on the status of the industry and the evolving needs of meeting planners,' said Gilbert. 'This information helps us better serve our members and meeting planners with conference and educational planning throughout the year.'

More than 1,000 attendees, representing meeting and event planners from a variety of organizations, with a majority representing corporate, association and independent sectors and the balance from government, non-profit, education, religious and medical/health care organizations, trade show management and the military, are expected to visit HSMAI's Affordable Meetings Mid-America 2008 show. Attendance at HSMAI's Affordable Meetings Mid-America is free-of-charge for qualified meeting planners.

Booth space is still available at the Mid-America Show and can be obtained by contacting Beth Petersen, show manager, GLM, (804) 261-3929, fax (804) 918-1547, e-mail: beth_petersen@glmshows.com.

Other shows for 2008 include: HSMAI's Affordable Meetings(R) West, June 11-12, 2008, Long Beach Convention Center - Long Beach, CA, and HSMAI's Affordable Meetings(R) National and Event Technology Expo(TM), Sept. 10-11, 2008, Walter E. Washington Convention Center - Washington, D.C.

Attendee information for HSMAI's Affordable Meetings(R) Mid-America is available by calling 1-800-272-SHOW. For additional information and a complete program schedule, visit www.affordablemeetings.com.

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