

## Biggest Meeting Industry Trend Is Increasing Use of Technology

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Planners Also Impacted by Rising Travel, Hotel and Gas Rates and Meetings Going Green

The Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International's (HSMAI) Affordable Meetings(R) National and Event Technology Expo(TM) pre-show survey revealed that planners are noticing an increase in the amount of technology used for meetings, big and small.

Respondents to the survey are planning to attend the Affordable Meetings(R) National Conference & Exposition and Event Technology Expo(TM), Sept. 10-11, 2008, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

The majority of meeting and event planners (57.5 percent) said they are incorporating technology into their meetings with the use of online registration, followed by video conferencing (20.4 percent), social networks (17.7 percent) and blogs (14.2 percent). Others mentioned the increasing use of electronic surveys, cyber cafes, and podcasts.

Planners also said that more education about technology and the options available would make their jobs easier. As one respondent said, "My job would be easier if I had a better understanding of meeting technology and how I can incorporate social networking into live events."

"To help planners find the resources they need in the technology space, we are launching the first annual Event Technology Expo in conjunction with Affordable Meetings," said Robert A. Gilbert, CHME, CHA, president and CEO of HSMAI. "Both will provide an opportunity for planners to connect with vendors and update their knowledge in both planning and technology-areas through 42 educational seminars and workshops."

Planners said that meeting technology resources (44.2 percent) is one of the top five vendors they will be seeking at Affordable Meetings National, an increase of nearly 10 percent compared to the Affordable Meetings(R) Mid-America pre-show survey in April. Others are in need of hotel and resort locations (84.1 percent), venues (57.5 percent), promotional items (54.9 percent) and transportation (43.4 percent).

The economy also continues to be a factor in meeting planning. Increasing travel costs, such as hotel rates, air fares and gas prices have cut into budgets for other meeting items such as food and beverage, technology and materials. Many planners cited the rising hotel rates and fees for amenities such as high-speed Internet and fitness centers as major factors in how they're planning future events. Beyond that, they are also looking for better communication from hotel staffs.

Additionally, planners are moving towards "greener" options for meetings. Planners noted a shift to recycle, reduce waste by reducing the use of water bottles and cans, and decrease on-site meeting materials, relying on electronic information and meetings technology.

More than 2,000 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 National and Event Technology Expo 2008 show. Attendance at HSMAI's Affordable Meetings National and Event Technology Expo is free-of-charge for qualified meeting and event planners.

HSMAI's Affordable Meetings remains a top conference for meeting planners looking for cost-saving advice as they go about their day-to-day responsibilities.

Exhibitors and hotel sales professionals attending Affordable Meetings National can also find additional educational opportunities by registering for HSMAI's Hotel Sales Strategy Conference on Sept. 9 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. Visit [www.hdosm.org](http://www.hdosm.org) for more information.

Booth space is still available at Affordable Meetings National and can be obtained by contacting Stephanie Leon-Santiago, exhibit sales coordinator, GLM, (914) 421-3213 e-mail: [stephanie\\_santiago@glmshows.com](mailto:stephanie_santiago@glmshows.com).

[http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/hsmmai/2008\\_natnlconf/](http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/hsmmai/2008_natnlconf/)

Click here to view the exhibitor prospectus or go to [http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/hsmmai/2008\\_natnl/](http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/hsmmai/2008_natnl/)

Attendee information for HSMAI's Affordable Meetings(R) National is available by calling 914-421-3200 Ext. 7777. For additional information and a complete program schedule, visit [www.affordablemeetings.com](http://www.affordablemeetings.com) or go to [www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/hsmmai/2008\\_natnlconf/](http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/hsmmai/2008_natnlconf/).

Event Technology Expo(TM) at HSMAI's Affordable Meetings(R) National is an exposition and conference addressing all aspects of technology as it relates to tradeshow, meetings, and special events. For information regarding exhibiting, contact Rob Weissman, Co-Producer, 212-679-9212, [raw@acsb2b.com](mailto:raw@acsb2b.com). Call 914.421.3200 Ext 7777, for information on attending Event Technology Expo. Visit [www.affordablemeetings.com/ete](http://www.affordablemeetings.com/ete) for more information.

## **About HSMAI's Affordable Meetings(R) National**

HSMAI's Affordable Meetings National will once again offer attendees the opportunity to meet and do business with more than 450 exhibiting companies during a unique exposition that will showcase venues, products and services to help produce various types of meetings and events. Year-after-year, the highly-acclaimed trade exposition is a main attraction for attendees looking to meet and network with knowledgeable suppliers who are determined to help produce valuable meetings and assist with purchasing decisions. Exhibitors represent hotels and resorts, university conference centers, unique meeting sites, convention and visitor bureaus, transportation companies, trade publications, software and audio/visual businesses, and other meeting and convention suppliers. HSMAI's Affordable Meetings is owned and presented by the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International Americas region and managed by GLM, a dmg world media business. Visit [www.affordablemeetings.com](http://www.affordablemeetings.com) or email [affordable\\_meetings@glmshows.com](mailto:affordable_meetings@glmshows.com) for more information.

## **About HSMAI**

HSMAI is an organization of sales and marketing professionals representing all segments of the hospitality industry. With a strong focus on education, HSMAI has become the industry champion in identifying and communicating trends in the hospitality industry, and bringing together customers and members at annual events, including HSMAI's Affordable Meetings(R). Founded in 1927, HSMAI is an individual membership organization comprising more than 7,000 members worldwide, with 40 chapters in the Americas Region. For more information on HSMAI, contact the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International, 1760 Old Meadow Road, Suite 500, McLean, Va. 22102, (703) 506-3280, fax (703) 506-3266, or visit the website at [www.hsm.ai.org](http://www.hsm.ai.org).

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