

The Corporate Market Segment – Is It Surviving?

“Yes!” is the answer. . . but also changing. Corporate meeting business may be different from how we have seen it in the past, but is still a definite and viable source of business if you know where to look, how to anticipate changes and react quickly to market conditions.

Yes, budgets have been cut, but business must go on, so companies are finding less expensive and more creative ways to still accomplish what needs to be done. Here are a few trends we can spot in this market. Read it with a pen handy to make adjustments to your plan and how you will address the changes.

Groups “trading down” in hotel class

Hotels in the “middle market” may actually see an increase in their corporate groups, due to companies, who traditionally would plan meetings and events at high end properties, saving money on hotel rooms by coming down a class or two on the rating scale. How can you react to this change? Prospect for group business with companies that you wouldn't ordinarily look at in a stronger market.

Nationwide increase in regional meetings

How many times in the past 8 months have you heard that national sales meetings have been cancelled? A lot, I would assume. In an effort to decrease travel expenses, companies are looking at smaller, drive-to regional meeting in order to save on airfare and hotel accommodations.

Increase in international visitation

Due to the value of the dollar, we have seen international companies take advantage and bring their meeting to the United States. As well, US companies that used to host meeting abroad are staying closer to home in an effort to save money.

Very short-term!

Even more so than before, the meetings market is booking with little time to spare! As well as the need to respond ASAP to all inquiries due to the short timeframe, be ready for planners needing a little extra help to pull together last minute details quickly.

Convention Center meetings market holding strong

If you haven't already done so, now is the time to start building and strengthening those relationships with CVB event planners. A few good referrals a year go a long way!

Shift from physical to virtual events in 2009

The majority of companies surveyed stated that they expected to have fewer physical sales kick off seminars - or none at all. A full 76% said their company has already begun using virtual events (53%) or plans to begin using them (23%) to supplement some of their physical events in 2009.

For more information on the Beverly Clark Hospitality Training Programs, please contact Lynne LaFond DeLuca at lynne@beverlyclarkenterprises.com and visit our website at www.beverlyclarktraining.com

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