

CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

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BEHIND THE SCENES

First, Engage

Webster's Dictionary defines the word 'engage' as, "Carry out or participate in an activity; be involved in;" "They engaged in a discussion."

Are you engaging your staff and meeting attendees at your events? If you're not sure, take a look at this newsletter. I'm really excited about this issue because it illustrates how the team of experts at metroConnections can engage staff and attendees through all three of our divisions.

In Conference Services, we are taking state-of-the-art technology and adding personal interaction to engage your meeting attendees before they head into the General Session and leave the tradeshow. Every meeting planner should get to know our Session Tracking and Lead Retrieval Systems within our Attend-eSource suite of web-based solutions.

In Event Production, we're creating new ways to engage your staff through fun, interactive events. Who wouldn't love an invitation to a corporate teambuilding event disguised as a Game Show or a Chili Cook-off? Many lessons can be learned around a chuck wagon.

Finally, in Transportation and Tours, we're seeing more and more engaging group tours. In this issue, see how metroConnections brings groups together in a gourmet kitchen. We have more adventurous options than ever before.

This past winter, metroConnections was recognized for outstanding work in the industry. Thanks to great partners like you, we can be proud of the work we do together. I hope you'll take a minute and read through the many accolades metroConnections has received over the past few months.

Engage in this issue and enjoy!

Sam Thompson
President, metroConnections

(continued from cover)

Meet ART, The Audience Response Technology

Gather and display anonymous feedback: The audience sees an immediate display of the gathered data on the meeting projection screens and learns how their peers responded. Comprehensive reports with graphs can be produced immediately too, or printed out for later use.

See a return on your investment: Let metroConnections develop concise conference analysis of the most important data to be used to make your post-conference decisions. Responses gathered on-site at a conference are often more comprehensive and informative than those gathered in a post-conference survey.

When used creatively, ART is a true meeting transformer that is more powerful and valuable than nearly any other audio-visual solution a meeting planner can incorporate.



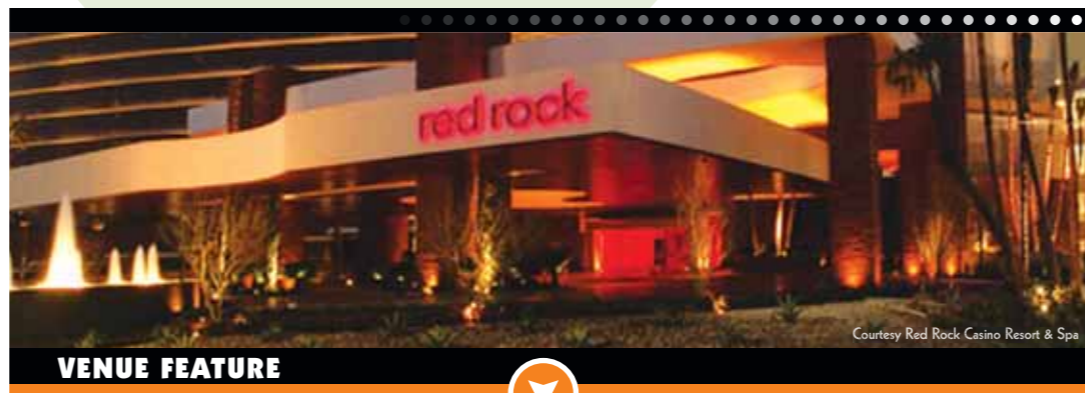
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VENUE FEATURE

Red Rock Casino Resort & Spa

Viva Las Vegas!

Forget memorable. Make your next corporate event or private party unforgettable. Red Rock offers more than 800 rooms, including 55 suites in six styles, as well as a three acre pool backyard, premiere shops, meeting spaces and a business center. A 94,000-square-foot facility offers meeting, convention and banquet space to accommodate groups from 15 to 1,500. Many of the spaces are naturally-lit and overlook the stunning Red Rock Canyon and three acre pool backyard.

Wow factor: guaranteed.

Let metroConnections coordinate, plan and execute your next event with ease and expertise.
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Spring 2008

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Meet ART, The Audience Response Technology

You are holding a conference for your Operations Managers to discuss policies and procedures that will change the face of your company and it's important that you get input from each of them. Images of ball-point pens and paper packets filled with important questions are swirling in your head, until your solution is presented by the metroConnections team. Meet ART.

ART, or Audience Response Technology, is a combination of wireless keypads and computer software that allows each audience member to respond to your multiple-choice questions during a presentation. "This leading-edge technology is used with meeting and convention audiences of all sizes to enable meeting planners and decision makers to gather instant feedback," explains David Graves, Senior Vice President of Event Production. "Meeting planners love it because it's immediate and it's live. Our customers have seen the value in the solution and they continue to explore this technology for their next programs. Companies and institutions including Life Time Fitness, Wells Fargo, Cubist Pharmaceuticals, Maurices Inc. and the University of Minnesota have all benefited from the technology," says Graves.

ART will help you run meetings that require constructive, two-way discussion. By using this solution, you can:
Engage audience in full participation: This method allows audience members to have interactive control of the session and engage in thoughtful large group dialogue.

Ask spontaneous or sensitive questions where appropriate: In turn, the moderator is able to tailor the presentation to the audience's feedback and add additional questions that pertain to previous topics already discussed, or that may be sensitive in nature.

(continued inside)

"We originally used this technology for a game show teambuilding activity. So one thing we discussed was the possibility of tying this technology into our 'development session'. We thought that by using this approach we would bring together what the [DM] team seems to like most - team work, competition, recognition, and personal growth, all into one format."

Daphne Riggle, Maurices

IN THIS
ISSUE



engage

...your staff and event attendees with technology and interactive events.



CONFERENCE SERVICES



EVENT PRODUCTION



TRANSPORTATION & TOURS



Technology and personal interaction join forces

metroConnections has combined meeting support and technology so that meeting planners can do their jobs with ease. Session Tracking and Lead Retrieval, two valuable services from the Attend-eSource suite of solutions, encourage interaction between meeting planners, exhibitors and attendees while collecting valuable data for post meeting use.

Session Tracking: Welcome...May I scan your badge?

Session Tracking allows you to make your guests feel welcome while capturing the information you'll need to plan future meetings.

At the entrance of each breakout or general session, your friendly greeter operates the Session Tracking handheld device. The greeter simply scans the unique bar code on the attendee's name badge and the data you need is collected.

Session Tracking can be used to benefit the meeting planner in a variety of ways. "The Institute for Internal Auditors (IIA) tracks attendee participation at all of their Educational Conferences so that they can award educational credits annually," says Mike Graves, Senior Vice President of Conference Services for metroConnections. "Other meeting planners use Session Tracking to control the number of people attending each session or to track the popularity of the sessions offered. It's a versatile technology."

Lead Retrieval: No Business Cards Required.

Help your exhibitors go paperless by providing a simple way of gathering valuable attendee contact information without ever swapping business cards.

Like with Session Tracking, the Lead Retrieval handheld scanner relies on a barcode printed on the attendee's name badge. Together, meeting planners and exhibitors determine the information they want to collect from the attendee. Fields of interest and actions such as "very interested" and "send materials" are assigned to each bar code. A list of barcodes and the handheld device is assigned to the exhibitor before the tradeshow begins. When the attendee visits a tradeshow booth, the exhibitor uses the scanner to capture the attendee's information. Without taking notes, an exhibitor can have a pleasant conversation and conclude her visit with one scan of the attendee's name badge and a few scans of the barcodes indicating the interests and actions.

"These systems are proving to be quite beneficial for our customers," adds Graves. "Not only do our customers like the technology for the information it gathers, it provides interaction with their attendees and the friendly face gathering the information adds a personal touch."

"Our exhibitors have been thrilled with the ease of accessing their lead information from attendees and we have found the workshop [session] tracking information to be very useful. Thank you for helping us to look good....once again!!"

*Theresa Link, CMP Senior Manager,
Conference Planning, Woodbury Financial Services, Inc.*



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Engaging events, Entertaining activities

The Finance Team is leading by two points. Your team is so close to winning you can taste the victory. The final trivia question appears on the screen at the front of the room. Your pulse races...your team knows the answer! But can the Finance Team keep it together and answer the question correctly too? Your team needs to answer this question correctly to win. You carefully enter the correct answer on your keypad. Silence. Then the emcee announces that all answers are in...and reveals the answer. Success! Your team is proclaimed the winner and the Finance Team's winning streak comes to an end!

You've just experienced the last round of metroConnections' interactive Trivia Game which incorporates the Audience Response Technology (ART). Each team is given a wireless keypad (ART) and is presented with trivia questions. The questions, accompanied by photos and music, appear on a large video screen. After the questions are revealed, each team enters their answer on the wireless keypad. The answers are immediately collected and tabulated and throughout the game, instant score updates and team percentages are displayed, keeping the competitive spirit alive.

This type of interactive event allows you to engage and entertain your attendees in a fun and familiar way, plus it is easy to plan. With one call to metroConnections, you can choose from our portfolio of available game shows like "Wheel of Fortune," "Name That Tune," "Tic Tac Dough," "Price is Right," "Pyramid," "Friendly Feud," "Team Jeopardy," "We're In The Money," "Face 2 Face," and "Let's Make a Deal." These games test musical knowledge, logic and problem solving skills of the participants, while experiencing all game show aspects from flashing lights and music to buzzers and the pressures of the clock. Add inspiration to the event with a variety of room and table décor.

metroConnections can also customize any of these games shows specifically for your company and incorporate your guests' names and pertinent information about your organization. The sky is the limit!

"The game show activities rated a "5" across the board on a scale of 1-5 as measured by the DM Team feedback! Comments were very supportive and [the DM Team] asked for us to have the game show format again at future meetings. Again, great job, they loved the activity! Thanks!"

*Daphne Riggle,
Maurices*

TEAMBUILDING: Round up a chili cook-off



In one of our most popular events, chili cook-off participants have a hootin' hollerin' good time as they compete in a series of games, earning "chili bucks" to purchase ingredients from the General Store. Each team has a homestead area equipped with one table, one burner, two large pot holders and a variety of cooking utensils. Prizes and a western buffet dinner - including chili and other cowboy favorites - follow the competition. For a true Western Round-Up, choose a covered wagon buffet station and red and white checkered linens.



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When groups get together, they cook up some fun

Most people are comfortable exploring new cities and places on their own. As a matter of fact, many conference attendees traveling to their meeting destination have already done their research for "things to do" before ever booking their ticket. Yet as part of a conference, the Meeting Planner plays a key role in providing excellent free-time and evening options for their guests.

That's where metroConnections comes in. Our Transportation and Tours division is more than just buses and shuttles. With more than 65 years of group tour planning experience, our specialists are prepared to plan an engaging group adventure for your next conference or meeting.

Vail Resorts recently came to Minneapolis to network with their local travel management representatives. Vail Resorts' Meeting Planner Liz Vinsand was charged with the task of arranging the activity. By working with Renee Splittgerber, metroConnections' Executive Sales Director, they were able to engage the group in an interactive dinner at "Let's Cook," a store and gourmet kitchen in Minneapolis. "I'm planning more and more interactive tours," says Splittgerber. "Planners are finding it to be a departure from the norm. Cooking is not only a trend, but it's a great ice-breaking activity for groups."

As the guests arrived, they experienced a gourmet cheese platter and a grand selection of beer and wine. Then, the dinner preparations were underway. The group participated in making scrumptious crab cakes, fantastic beef tenderloin and for dessert, honey caramel pecan triangles with shortbread crust and chocolate drizzle.

Imagine your next group tour, or should we say group adventure? Why plan a simple fiesta for your group when they can make their own guacamole and homemade sea salt lime chips? Contact our Transportation and Tour specialists to begin planning your next group tour today.

"As the managing Tour Guide for this event, I enjoyed watching our client network with their guests during this event. What a wonderful way to connect - with food that goes straight to the heart."

*Tracy DeJong, Tour Guide Manager,
metroConnections*

IN THE NEWS: Accomplishments and Accolades

- Named "Best Destination Management Company" and "Best Event Décor" by the readers of *Minnesota Meetings + Events Magazine*.
- Designated a Top 25 DMC (Destination Management Company) by *Special Events Magazine*.
- Awarded "Best Innovative Event - \$50,000 and Under" by the Association of Destination Management Executives (ADME).
- First ADME-accredited DMC in Minnesota.
- Tom McCulloch, Vice President of Marketing and Conference Services, inducted into *Minnesota Meetings + Events Hall of Fame* as the 2007 Supplier of the Year.
- Successfully completed transportation logistics and shuttle services for the 2008 U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Saint Paul, Minn., moving 30,000 athletes, coaches, family and fans.



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