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## On Stage - October / November 2008

# Sourcing Entertainment

Adapted from an article written by Kelley Howard of ACCESS Destination Services for *Association Convention & Facilities*, Oct./Nov. 2008 Issue.

by Kelley Howard

Entertainment can make or break a program. So, prudence follows that when choosing entertainment you go with a tested resource. But, a tested resource may equal more than a few greenbacks.

When the goal is to maximize budget while maximizing your attendees' experience here are a few best bets:

- ◆ Use a local entertainment resource [such as ACCESS Destination Services.] Local entertainers mean budget savings and often signature offerings.
- ◆ When your attendee profile is diverse, often the most challenging aspect of selecting entertainment is appealing to everyone. In lieu of offering one band, combine background music with entertainment stations. From the tried-and-true caricaturist or palm reader to Indian potters to handwriting analysis to material sculptors to massage booths, you can appeal to a broad attendee profile and still manage your budget.
- ◆ Need to make a big impression with a minimal budget for a general session opening? A local high school band can be used to "trumpet" in the program. They often only require a donation to their school and have their own transportation.
- ◆ Watch out for the "rider factor." Before you book the band, make sure you know what their rider entails. You could end up paying for airfare, meals, transportation and more in addition to their performance cost.
- ◆ With networking being the focus of many events, keep in mind that a band is not always necessary. Popular alternative choices include exhibition dancers, hot-air balloon rides (check with your hotel or event venue for adequate space), ice carvers and tribute shows. Short "shows" allow more networking time while providing an experience.



Kelley Howard is a sales manager for ACCESS Destination Services in Palm Springs, CA. She has more than 12 years of experience in the hospitality industry. She sits as the vice president of finance for the San Diego chapter of Meeting Professionals International (SDMPI) and has received numerous industry awards and acknowledgements for her work, including being named Planner of the Year in 2005 from SDMPI.



**Jimmy Buffett Sets Two California Concerts**  
Jimmy Buffett and world-famous financier Warren Buffett share a rare moment on stage at the opening of one of Jimmy's popular restaurants — Cheeseburger in Paradise. Jimmy will delight his fans in California on January 20 at San Jose's HP Pavilion and on January 24 at the Honda Center in Anaheim (Arrowhead Pond).  
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Wondering how to find out what options are the best bang for your buck? Ask a local resource such as your destination management partner, your convention and visitors bureau, or the hotel property. Local expertise proves invaluable when allocating budget toward this important program element. **ACF**