



[Home / Breaking News](#)

[Other Publications](#)

This Issue

[On The Cover](#)

[Newswatch](#)

[Meeting Values](#)

[Events Calendar](#)

[Columns](#)

[Features](#)

[Destinations](#)

[People](#)

[Archives](#)

Advertising

[2007 Subscriber Profile](#)

[2009 Rate Card](#)

[2009 Web Ad Rate Card](#)

[2009 Editorial Calendar](#)

[Offices & Reps](#)

[Our Advertisers](#)

Services

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Subscribe](#)

Feature - November 2008

**Working
With DMCs**



The following features excerpts from a November, 2008 *Corporate & Incentive Travel* feature article **written by Diana Rowe.**

When planners need a tried and true formula for meeting success, they often turn to a recognized destination management company (DMC) because they have extensive and comprehensive knowledge of the destination and the meeting planning process. Moreover, a great DMC can help a planner save valuable time and get the most bang for her buck, which is certainly the No. 1 priority nowadays.

Christopher H. Lee, DMCP, a past president of the Association of Destination Management Executives (ADME) and CEO of Southern California-based Access Destination Services, defines and understands the profession first hand. Locating the perfect DMC, Lee admitted, can be as complicated as finding the perfect mate. (See box.) However, he said the No. 1 reason planners should hire a DMC is time.

A Real Time-Saver

"In this economy, and for the foreseeable future," explained Lee, "planners are forced to do more with less. Hiring a DMC as an extension of your staff/team produces greater ROI and minimizes the likelihood of something falling through the cracks.

"DMCs are a planner's local lifeline," said Lee. "Meeting planners save time and benefit from the DMC's intimate knowledge of local products, services, venues, attractions and other offerings. DMCs have tried and tested the very latest in their destination, so they can save you the time and aggravation of vetting out the best vendors and venues for your meeting. DMCs research several options and negotiate on your behalf, always keeping your best interest and budget in mind."

Access Destination Services has four owner-operated offices in the western United States. The owners, who have worked together for more than 20 years, offer more than 100 years combined experience in destination management.

"A local DMC like Access," said Lee, "is the planner's objective resource in hotel selection. They can evaluate things like driving distances, venue availability, etc. before the planner signs lodging or food and beverage contracts."

"We can also save you money. By drawing on our local and global infrastructure, we can leverage our long-time relationships and purchasing power to provide the highest quality of service in a cost-effective manner."



**Kelley Howard, CMP
Sales Manager
Access Destination Services
Palm Springs
Palm Desert, CA**

Patty Struzik, West division coordinator of Plano, TX-based Pepsi-Cola North America, was referred to her host hotel's onsite DMC, Access Destination Services Palm Springs.

"For the past three years, the Westin Mission Hills in Palm Springs hosted our division staff meeting," said Struzik. "We wanted to add a teambuilding component to the meeting, and I needed the expertise of a local expert to pull it off. The hotel recommended Access."

Feature - November 2008 *continued*

However, Struzik still did her homework. She researched the recommended DMC, reviewed their client testimonials and details of previous events. After speaking with Kelley Howard, CMP, sales manager, Access Destination Services Palm Springs, she felt confident this DMC was the right partner. Then she sent them her teambuilding idea for a chili cook-off. Access added a few components and executed it, including judging the cook-off.

“Attendees came to me after the event just to say it was the best team-building event they’d ever experienced,” recalled Struzik. “However, it could’ve been a catastrophe. We’d planned an outdoor terrace cook-off, but the weather didn’t cooperate. I didn’t have a chance to even worry, as between Access and the hotel, the cook-off was flawlessly moved inside.”

Struzik also took advantage of the DMC’s local vendor access for their opening night luau. “Somehow Access worked their magic turning a standard poolside party and created a customized tropical island hideaway — seemingly dropping us into an authentic Hawaiian luau, including music. That’s the beauty of having a local authority with established connections to the right vendors.”

Howard said planners often overlook the value of a local destination management company. “From living and working in our destination, our intimate local knowledge makes us a good partner for planners. We know the ins and outs of the community, the well-known and hidden offsite venues, local vendors and all the ‘rules’ for making an event happen.”

For example, Access has an established partnership with the popular Empire Polo Club, a prestigious Palm Springs venue offering meeting space and exhibition games. The DMC stays informed of available dates for a private event and knows the schedule of polo matches; what the right transportation company is; and how to personalize the entire polo event to match the company’s objectives and goals.

A Real Money-Saver

“We can also save you money,” added Howard. “By drawing on our local and global infrastructure, we can leverage our long-time relationships and purchasing power to provide the highest quality of service in a cost-effective manner.”



Home / Breaking News

Other Publications

This Issue

On The Cover

Newswatch

Meeting Values

Events Calendar

Columns

Features

Destinations

People

Archives

Advertising

2007 Subscriber Profile

2009 Rate Card

2009 Web Ad Rate Card

2009 Editorial Calendar

Offices & Reps

Our Advertisers

Services

About Us

Contact Us

Subscribe

***The Simple Way To Choose The DMC
That’s Right For You***

Most meeting planners do not have the time or budget to personally research all of the possibilities and specifics for every destination being considered for their group programs. At best, they possess basic knowledge of the destinations being considered. However, many companies expect the planner to be an expert in every aspect of every destination.



**By Christopher H.
Lee, DMCP
CEO
Access Destination
Services
www.accessdmc.com**

The process of selecting a destination management company (DMC) to assist you in designing and implementing events, activities, tours, transportation and program logistics for your group can be quite simple. However, not partnering with a DMC, or partnering with the wrong DMC, can negatively affect your entire program.

Here are some guidelines:

- ◆ Word of mouth. Ask your peers and colleagues whom they have worked with successfully in the destination/region where your program will be held.
- ◆ Check the Association of Destination Management Executives (adme.org). The most professional DMCs are members.
- ◆ Ask the Convention & Visitors Bureau in the city where your program will take place for their three top DMC recommendations.
- ◆ Ask the hotel you are working with for their top three recommendations as well.
- ◆ Check the membership directories of professional associations you belong to, such as Meeting Professionals International, the Society of Incentive Travel Executives, etc.