



**Different by Nature.**

**SALT LAKE CUSTOMER ADVISORY BOARD  
September 22 - 24, 2011 Meeting Minutes  
Confidential**

**Board Members (in Attendance)**

Lisa Astorga	Talley Management Group
Kim Bladen	Educational Testing Services
Michael Brennan	Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc.
Nelson Fabian	National Environmental Health Association
Lori Jenks	Nielsen Business Media
Roberta Kravitz	International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine
Nicole Kooistra, CMP	XANGO
Nicolina Mangano	American Bar Association
Mike Morgan	Novell, Inc.
Penny Pina, CMP	American Mathematical Society
Gary Schirmacher, CMP	Experient
Mollie Wallace	Planning Professionals

**Salt Lake Host Committee**

Scott Beck	Visit Salt Lake
Mark H. White	Visit Salt Lake

**Facilitator**

David Kliman, CMP, CMM	The Kliman Group
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**Graphic Recorder**

Sophia Liang	Graphic Footprints
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**Gallery Attendees**

Michael Mack	Visit Salt Lake
Todd Ness	Visit Salt Lake
Sally O'Neill	Visit Salt Lake
Chris Peterson	Visit Salt Lake
Tori Piersante	Visit Salt Lake

Alison Gates	Visit Salt Lake
Eric Thompson	Visit Salt Lake
Angela Tyler	Visit Salt Lake
Diane Utley	Visit Salt Lake
Julie Rhoads	Visit Salt Lake
Tamme Thompson	Visit Salt Lake
Cannon Tarbet	Visit Salt Lake
Clorinda Holland	Visit Salt Lake
Carey Fenn-Moses	Visit Salt Lake
Eddie Canady	Visit Salt Lake
Lauren Van Bergen	Visit Salt Lake
Bruce Fery	The Grand America
Bob O'Neill	Marriott Hotels
Mark Erekson	Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort
Ruth Naccarato	Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort
Tessa Baysinger	Salt Palace Convention Center
Tina Stark	The Housing Connection
Dennis Porter	Red Lion Hotel
Alan Rindlisbacher	Layton Construction
Keith Griffall	Chairman - Visit Salt Lake
Toby Huebner	Salt Palace Convention Center
John Daich	Salt Palace Convention Center
Trent H. Hansen	The Housing Connection
Wendy Adamson	Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort

**Friday, September 23, 2011**

**Welcome**

Board members, Salt Lake hosts and Gallery attendees made introductions.

**Opening Comments – Scott Beck, Mark White and David Kliman**

Scott and David welcomed the Board and thanked them for their time and commitment to Salt Lake. The Board was asked to speak honestly and openly on behalf of the meetings and convention industry as well as their respective organizations. Salt Lake will listen and learn from the Board and appropriate action will be taken on its recommendations. Scott expressed heartfelt gratitude for the Board's feedback and guidance regarding key issues. Snowbird was thanked for the generosity in hosting the meeting.

Scott and Mark provided an update regarding Salt Lake's performance and forecast:

- 2011 room night production is ahead of 2010
- Transient Room Tax (TRT) is up 5.5%+ over 2010
- Occupancy growing, but not rates
- Business Travel is rebounding
- Very strong ski season with record snowfall (800+ inches at Snowbird)
- Convention attendance exceeding Visit Salt Lake's forecasts

- Visitor length of stay is increasing
- Diverse Utah economy is strong, unemployment 2% lower than national average
- Convention Pipeline:
  - 2011 group production is strong and better than 2010.
  - 2012 also strong, but 2013 and 2014 are weak; 2015 and beyond are on pace
  - 2011 goal: 417,000 group room nights on pace to hit 91% of target
  - Planners expect attendance to be normal, but they are booking less rooms knowing attendees book outside the block
  - Booking window is shrinking
  - Lack of Convention Center headquarter hotel hinders group bookings
  - Denver is top group competitive destination

### Advisory Board Feedback

- Most associations typically block only 30 to 40% of total rooms knowing the majority of attendees are “extremely creative” and will book outside the official room block
- Noted that the Hotel industry may not be responsible for the increased channels available to book hotel inventory in a destination , but their support of these channels has added to the “bleed” away from official group room blocks
- Tracking auxiliary financial impact of convention attendees was cited as very important
- Development of an alternative measurement model which incorporates a group’s attendance/total economic impact was cited as highly desirable
- Measuring the success of a DMO based on group room blocks was cited as outdated and inaccurate

### City Creek

Scott reviewed the City Creek plan; the following outlines his comments:



- \$2.3 Billion privately funded investment represents the creation of a new and revitalized downtown for Salt Lake

- Project is a world-class urban mix use development combining retail, office and residential
- Enhances the legacy and history of Salt Lake and LDS Church Headquarters complex
- First ever LEED Silver certification for a Mixed Use development is expected
- Innovative iconic architecture
- Completion in March 2012
- Retail space anchored by Nordstrom and Macys; retractable roof galleria modeled after Milan Italy's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II [City Creek Center - Taubman](#)
- 800 residential units [www.citycreekliving.com](http://www.citycreekliving.com) includes 111 rental units
- Pedestrian centric; shortened city blocks making them more user friendly; sky bridge over Main Street
- Retail stores include:
  - 77kids® by american eagle®
  - BCBGMAXAZRIA
  - Bose
  - Brooks Brothers
  - Coach
  - Cotton On
  - The Limited
  - L'OCCITANE
  - Love Culture
  - LUSH Fresh Handmade Cosmetics
  - Macy's
  - Michael Kors
  - Nordstrom
  - N3L Optics
  - PANDORA
  - Papyrus
  - Porsche Design
  - Swarovski
  - Texas de Brazil Churrascaria
  - Tiffany & Co.
  - TUMI
  - Yankee Candle Company

**Action Items Update from November 2010 meeting** *(progress shown in italics)*

- Develop programs which customizes site inspections based on customers' needs and business objectives
  - *Personalized check list developed, focus on sharing concepts and venues appropriate to specific client's needs, sales team reports planners are receptive to new personalized format*
- Develop increased political clout to address Utah Olympic Park services to meeting professionals
  - *Convention Services and local DMC have addressed this and are confident the poor communication issues experienced by YMCA has been "buttoned up and addressed"*
- Ask group contacts if they'd like increased uniformed police presence in and around downtown core during their meeting
  - *Completed and on-going*
- Combine Convention Center walk-through with new member orientation session at future CAB meetings
  - *Will include Convention Center and City Creek site inspection during April 2012 and future CAB meetings*

## **Industry Trends**

The Advisory Board was asked to discuss key industry trends; the following summarizes their comments:

### **Sponsorship**

- Attracting sponsors in recessionary economic times was cited as problematic for some associations, DMO was asked to develop list of successful sponsorship options in the destination
- Many Pharma clients have cut back on sponsorship; some feel they use government regulations as an excuse not to participate as sponsors
- XANGO sponsorship sample photos are attached to this report

### **Technology**

- Use of QR codes (Quick Response) is growing but some believe Near Field Communication may replace QR codes in the near future  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near\\_field\\_communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near_field_communication)

### **Hotel Rates**

- Rates for self contained meetings are increasing, hotels are less willing to negotiate
- Hotels don't want government meetings unless there is a "major hole"; using alternative venues (universities etc.) for these meetings
- Many hotels are mimicking airlines' "a la carte" fee structure; this is annoying meeting professionals who feel hoteliers' memories of a down market have been erased
- Shortened booking window, but often hard to get quick responses from hotels; need key decision makers to partner more effectively
- Best Rate First was a strong recommendation, cut down on the back and forth

### **Wi-Fi**

- Strong demand for free Wi-Fi in hotels and Convention Centers and other public spaces for personal use bandwidth; "data hogs" expect to be charged for bandwidth to support streaming video etc.
- Some show managers and meeting professionals are willing to pay a moderate fee for Wi-Fi access provided the connectivity levels are guaranteed not to fail
- Strong demand for abundant number of electrical charging stations in public areas of the Convention Center; typical convention attendees now travel with multiple smart devices, many of which require recharging during the course of a day, similar to airport charging stations
- Effective October 21, 2010, McCormick Place is offering free Wi-Fi service in all areas of the facility including common areas, exhibit halls and meeting rooms
- Wi-Fi connectivity is considered a basic right "similar to oxygen"
- The new American culture is focused on asking for discounts for everything

## **Meeting Content**

- Some associations are shifting focus from education to training; providing more interactive educational offerings to attract and retain Gen Y attendees
- Increased co-location of events with international organizations
- Increased use of virtual and blended events
- Strong focus on green meetings
- Social media used to build attendance and enhance attendee experience

#### **Miscellaneous**

- Some paying room rebates to attendees after the event (as incentive for booking inside room block); while some offering food credits instead of room rebates
- ROI measurement cited by one member as increasing in importance
- Strong need to educate policy makers regarding economic importance and impact of meetings/events and tourism

#### **Customer Report Card – National Student Nurses Association – April 6 to 11, 2011**

Michael Brennan outlined the highlights of this recent meeting; the following summarizes his comments:

- Meeting goal: mentor nursing students and develop future leaders
- Many attendees are first time travelers with very limited budgets; on their second career and/or 25+ years old

#### **Hotels**

- Hotel contracts signed in 2007, pre recession
- Radisson worked well with the group to mitigate attrition issues
- Peak room nights = 1,095, total of 3,908 room nights booked, just below 2009 levels
- Housing Connection was “great”; but overloaded NSNA with volume of reports
- Shilo Inn Hotel rooms are “tired”

#### **Salt Palace**

- Well managed, but some areas of the center are “tired” and need renovation/capital improvements
- Main entrance not well maintained, weeds and dead plants, “could have looked better”
- Cars exiting City Creek Center’s underground garage travel at high speeds out of the ramp; possible safety issue for pedestrians

#### **General Issues**

- Delta hub is great but fares are high
- Perfect safety and security; “no issues at all”
- TRAX is great; but could market it more effectively; highlight stops and destinations
- No Labor issues
- Compared to other cities, Salt Lake is “really good”
- Taxis availability and restaurants were “great”
- Hope to rebook for 2017

## **Digital Bid Presentation**

<http://www.visitsaltlake.com/BIDS/saltlakewelcomes2.pdf>

Mark outlined Visit Salt Lake's digital bid presentation; the following summarizes his comments and the Board's feedback:

- Bid responses are normally hand delivered by a Salt Lake representative (not via FedEx) in a branded cardboard box
- Bid responses are customized and include 1 or 2 two page summary

## **Advisory Board feedback**

- Some felt response is "old school"; it should be more interactive; while some liked the "old school" style presentation
- All agreed the presentation needs to be more customized
- Lead with information that is most critical to the client
- Letters of support are key, but they should not be readily identifiable as form letters; potential to use QR codes for key letters of support
- Create YouTube video from the Mayor stating support for the bid and the meeting
- Embed information using web links in simple document
- Use Sophia Liang Graphic Reporting to create memorable bid responses
- Develop peer to peer testimonials regarding realities and ease of liquor service
- Develop "fly through" virtual site inspection of the Convention Center viewable on tablet computers suitable for use during bid presentations
- Create "WOW" factor, bid presentations that are "so cool" that they take on a life of their own (become viral)
- Ensure the bid response is exactly in the format the client desires; "one size does not fit all"; do not send content that is not specifically relevant to the client
- Effectively communicate the deep and meaningful relationships which the DMO's sales and service team offers meeting professionals and show managers

## **Social Media and Mobile Technology**

Scott Beck discussed Visit Salt Lake's social media and mobile platforms; the following outlines his comments and the Advisory Board feedback:

- No one can control all mobile information; but a DMO can effectively act as a funnel
- Belief that mobile websites (not apps) will dominate the market
- Aggregator sites such as [www.flipboard.com](http://www.flipboard.com), [www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com) and [www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com) allow users to engage social media seamlessly on their own terms
- [www.outdoorretailer.com](http://www.outdoorretailer.com) cited as a very effective convention user of aggregated social media; Visit Salt Lake partners to populate information within customer website; used for attendance building and onsite information; extended the life of the event
- Provide red colored "help button" to assist users

- Use of Near Field Communication (NFC) is expected to expand significantly and will have a major impact on information sharing for meetings and conventions; some believe NFC will replace QR codes quickly [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near\\_field\\_communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near_field_communication)
- [www.sxsw.com](http://www.sxsw.com) cited as a best practice example of leading edge use of social media and mobile technology during a trade show and convention
- [www.meetingapps.com](http://www.meetingapps.com) documents services available for all platforms
- [www.corbinball.com](http://www.corbinball.com) cited as excellent resource for information
- To build online followers:
  1. Ask questions on Facebook, engage people with responses
  2. Create dialogues; then everyone who follows your friends will see your postings
  3. Push information to social media leaders; reminds people you have a social media strategy
  4. Find people with high [www.klout.com](http://www.klout.com) scores and engage them
  5. Call on key meeting stakeholders to seed online conversations
- *Fork in the Road* by Michele Bruno provides excellent view of the technology related desires of trade show attendees  
<http://www.tsnn.com/news-blogs/attendees-trade-show-technology-wish-list>

## **Saturday, September 24, 2011**

### **Attendance Building Tools**

- Scott Beck shared new attendance building videos which were heartily endorsed by the Advisory Board as very effective; 3 versions will be produced targeting the Meetings & Conventions, Ski Markets and Leisure/Package Tours markets

### **Meeting Industry Trade Associations**

The Advisory Board was asked to discuss which meeting associations are most valuable; the following summarizes their feedback:

- PCMA's annual meeting is considered "best in class" especially for senior planners
- MPI lacks senior planner educational content
- ASAE Tradeshow considered very valuable; offers "one stop shopping"
- Salt Lake should not host PMCA during its January annual meeting rotation cycle due to potential poor weather and air inversions which create hazy skies that obliterate mountain views from downtown; better to host a smaller summer PMCA leadership meeting

### **Sustainability**

The Advisory Board discussed sustainability and its position and importance in the meeting industry; the following summarizes their comments:

- Sustainability is not a trend, it is a cultural imperative; Salt Lake should continue to provide leadership

- Salt Lake has a unique sustainability identify shared only by Portland
- Measurement tools are not readily available to prove sustainability impact
- Visit Salt Lake provides carbon offset widget on website that groups can use, next version will allow users to choose the organization to benefit from offset <http://www.visitsaltlake.com/visit/green/>
- Salt Palace installing 11,319 solar panels on its roof top which will generate 40% of its power needs  
[http://www.visitsaltlake.com/meeting\\_professionals/green/](http://www.visitsaltlake.com/meeting_professionals/green/)
- Outdoor Retailers Sustainability programs can be found at <http://www.outdoorretailer.com/info/green-steps>; Lori Jenks offered to share all best practices found on this site
- [www.cleanttheworld.org](http://www.cleanttheworld.org) was cited for their outstanding efforts to provide recycled hotel soap to communities in need
- [www.build-a-bike.com](http://www.build-a-bike.com) was cited for their socially responsible activities
- When ISMRM first discussed sustainability practices for its convention in 2006, most volunteers leaders were not very interested; now practices are deeply embraced
- Some members report that environmentally sustainable practices are not a major priority for their meetings, but expect that will change; difficult to get Boards of Directors to embrace sustainable practices without strong measurement tools
- Recycled convention bags are becoming popular; to address potential lost sponsorship, some build a central area on show floor and use QR codes instead of convention bag (sponsored) inserts; may represent new sponsorship opportunity
- Network marketing companies and their attendees want convention bags which are used from branding; these are typically sourced locally

### **Future Meetings**

- Next meeting dates: April 12 to 14, 2012; host hotel is Marriott Downtown
- Microsite will be created to house all Advisory Board related information
- Include educational session at future Advisory Board meetings; possible speakers: Michele Bruno, Midori Connolly, David Kliman (Power iPad use)
- Include session to experience the “back of house story” of the Salt Palace

### **Wrap Up**

The Board was thanked for their commitment to the process of continuous improvement for Salt Lake. Their feedback is tremendously helpful; their candor and honest dialogue will be put to good use.

Lisa Astorga, Dave Kanagy, Marguerite Leishman, Nicolina Mangano, Andrea Reno, Amanda Rushing, Matthew Schermerhorn, Gary Schirmacher and Kendall Starkweather completed their terms on the Advisory Board and were thanked for their service.

The meeting was adjourned. Recommendations and Actions Items are found below.

### **Recommendations and Action Items from the September 2011 meeting**

- Develop and share list of outstanding sponsorship opportunities specific to Salt Lake
- Advise SMG that they need to improve their service delivery and commitment to address service lapses at the Center
- Invite senior SMG executives from sales, services and technology to attend the April 2012 Advisory Board meeting

### **Salt Palace Issues**

- Significant improvement required regarding Wi-Fi connectivity at the Salt Palace
- Advisory Board members cite current standards as “flawed and not transparent”
- Customized technology plans should be created for all Center users based on individual clients’ requirements
- IT professional should be assigned to each show manager to manage technology needs in real time
- Include SMG executives in discussions regarding technology costs at the Center
- Document and share information regarding all dead zones within the Center
- Provide real life examples to show managers and meeting professional regarding how the Convention Centers manages Wi-Fi; provide examples of normal and “data hog” usage
- Salt Palace should offer free basic Wi-Fi and charge for bandwidth access beyond the basic level
- Use Novell’s model as best practice for technology needs at the Convention Center
- Work with preferred technology vendors (not exclusive) to provide technology access
- Offer technology guidance and check list for planners early in the bid process
- Develop “fly through” virtual site inspection of the Convention Center viewable on tablet computers suitable for use during bid presentations

### **Digital Bid Presentation**

- Use Sophia Liang Graphic Reporting to create memorable bid responses
- Create bid responses that are “so cool” that they go viral and take on a “life of their own”
- Share information regarding similar groups which have used Salt Lake by providing links to their Social Media sites

### **Social Media**

- Send Advisory Board links to 3 new attendance building videos

### **Sustainability**

- Highlight examples of Salt Lakes sustainable efforts with all current and potential customers