Benchmark Hospitality International Lists "Top Ten Meetings Trends" for 2008

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1. Green Meetings
Pharmaceutical companies, medical companies, and especially government agencies have been requesting information on a venue's green policies up front in the RFP.

2. Technological Advancements
Updates and advancements are occurring at lightning speed. Wireless connectivity is an expectation, not a novelty. The challenge is to stay ahead of the curve when it's difficult just to keep up.

3. Laptops in Meeting Rooms
Companies are starting to encourage the use of laptops in the meeting rooms for note-taking and facilitator-directed research.

4. Using the Web for Contracts
A paperless system is the ideal, with about 80% of RFPs, proposals and contracts being handled online. Responses are also expected to be very fast-usually by the close of the business day.

5. Healthy Snacks
For a bit, it seemed comfort foods were back in style, but now food and snacks are expected to be varied, plentiful, fresh, colorful, full of protein, low fat and low calorie.

6. Teambuilding
Teambuilding is increasingly popular and often driven by the destination. The preference is outdoor, physical activities and more cerebral group exercises.

7. Meeting Package Pricing
For increased cost effectiveness, meetings have been fewer in number, but with more attendees. This trend has increased demand for meeting packages with solid, no-hidden-fees pricing.

8. Remaining as Current as Possible
Business is changing everyday; companies morph and merge and products become obsolete as new technology is produced. It is more important than ever to stay abreast of industry trends and be knowledgeable about the latest technology.

9. Destination Recreation
Skip golf and the spa. Try using the unique features of the destination for breaks and recreation: Walking, biking and hiking through forests, touring historic sites, climbing mountains and mesas... it's an entire destination meeting experience.

10. Interactive Event Websites
Internet-based conference learning tools are increasingly popular. Websites are set up by group leaders for a particular meeting and designed for attendees to reference before the meeting even begins, as well as throughout the conference as a review of the material discussed during the day. The sites also enable feedback and group interaction.

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