

LODGING



Marriott Survey Predicts More Spending on Meetings in 2018

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LAS VEGAS, Nev.—During IMEX America—the worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings, and events—Marriott International released results from a proprietary survey of the company’s Convention Resort Network, a collection of 100 of the largest convention and resort hotels across the Americas. Marriott received responses from 80 hotels that answered a series of questions such as projected group spend in 2018, group business trends in food & beverage, and the use of technology.

Half of the survey respondents (51 percent) expect that compared to 2017, their projected group room nights in 2018 will be “significantly” or “slightly” more and 54 percent expect projected group spend to increase next year. A quarter of respondents (26 percent) reported that a significant ballroom or meeting room renovation is underway, and 27 percent said that they plan to add new technology to meetings in 2018. The top tech trend (according to 55 percent of respondents) is “real-time interaction” between the presenter and the audience.

When it comes to catering trends, 38 percent of respondents in the Marriott survey cite “street/local food” as their No. 1 catering trend, with healthy food in second place (29 percent).

The results are based on a survey conducted by Marriott International of 80 Marriott hotels throughout North America participated in an online survey conducted between October 6-7, 2017. The hotels were asked a series of multiple-choice questions to identify their hotel by property type, describe their location, share projected group room nights and spend for 2018, and answer a series of questions on group business trends from food & beverage selections to the use of technology.

In 2016, group business represented 28 percent of room nights for full-service Marriott hotels. The company also announced at IMEX America an initiative to enhance tools and venue choices for meeting planners as part of efforts to expand group business next year. The plan targets millennial groups in particular with Internet of Things rooms, meetings apps available in six brands and 20 languages, a website with a digital meetings inspiration board—MeetingsImagined.com, and community-minded programming.