



Open sesame

STARWOOD

Hotels' keyless hotel room entry goes live today in the US, which



means no more queuing at the reception desk for SPG members, the idea being they can use their smartphone to unlock their door.

It started with Marriott International enabling its hotel guests to check into 330 of its American hotels through an app, an innovation that netted it a mammoth US\$1.25b in bookings last year.

Starwood's SPG keyless technology works when an SPG member makes a reservation at one of the first 10 keyless hotels 24 hours before arrival and receives their room number and Bluetooth key via the app.

Once there, they simply go straight to their room, open the SPG app, tap the smartphone on the door lock, wait for the green light and enter the room.

It's currently available at various hotels including Aloft Beijing, W Hong Kong and W Doha.

By the end of the year it is expected that 30,000 doors in 150 Starwood hotels across the globe will be activated.

Hilton Worldwide also plans to roll out the technology in the northern spring. *Jill*

BE Sydney's results up

BUSINESS Events Sydney (BE Sydney) posted stronger results for events delivered in the 2013/14 financial year than the previous year.

A BE Sydney spokesperson told **BEN** the 76 events delivered this year saw delegates spend nearly 284,000 days in NSW, with an economic impact of \$249.2m calculated based on attendance

and daily spend estimates.

This was a stronger result than 2012/13 when the 86 events delivered saw about 210,000 delegate days, with an economic impact of \$175.5m, the spokesperson said.

The number of events was just one measure of success, the spokesperson said.

In its annual report, published at its annual general meeting in October, BE Sydney said it had secured 84 events this year, worth about \$200.1m, compared with 73 bids won in the 2012/13 financial year at an estimated impact of \$113.1m.

In addition, 17 international events had been secured for the International Convention Centre Sydney, the annual report said.

BE Sydney chair Col Hughes said sound business strategies and execution, as well as strengthened connections with government and corporate bodies, had aided the results.

Accor NSW/ACT operations vice president Scott Boyes and Sydney Harbour Marriott Circular Quay sales and marketing director Helen Radic were also elected as new member directors at the annual general meeting.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the report.

DMS India famil



A GROUP of five Australian and New Zealand conference and incentive organisers took an educational to India from 17 to 24 Oct, escorted by DMS.

The group (**pictured**) started with a tour of Delhi by Cox and Kings before boarding the Deccan Odyssey train to head to Agra and Jaipur, DMS said.

Highlights included tiger spotting in Ranthambore National Park and a visit to the Taj Mahal, the company said.

Sky high in Singapore

A SELECT number of hosted buyers, including a number of Australians, were invited to Marina Bay Sands, Sky on 57 last Wednesday after a day at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre attending ITB Asia.

The event, high in every aspect, was held on the deck of celebrity chef Justin Quek's restaurant, which offers the best view of Singapore and the bay.

As a heads up, the iconic Marina Bay Sands development, built at



a cost of US\$4.7b, is the world's most expensive building.

Pictured from left is Justin Quek, Sky on 57 chef and Ailynn Seah executive director of sales, Marina Bay Sands Singapore.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more photos.

Four pages today

BEN has two pages of editorial plus full pages from (**click**):

- Captain Cook Cruises
- Christmas Events Venue Guide

Hawaii biz ev guide

HAWAII Tourism Oceania has launched a guide for business events planners called the Meet Hawaii Guide, which is free to download.

The guide provided information such as available conference, meeting and event facilities, touring activities and team building opportunities, as well as business tourism related contacts and a general overview of the islands, the organisation said.

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SA brands on show

SOUTH Australian food and wine products will be on show for Chinese investors and consumers for three months at the Double Tree by Hilton Beijing.

Five brands including Bird In Hand winery and Haigh's chocolate would be showcased through a range of events from 21 Nov to 28 Feb, Minister Martin Hamilton-Smith said.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.

UTS Gehry building

THE photo used in **BEN** 03 Nov of the UTS Business School building was courtesy of Gehry Partners LLP.



business events news

5th November 2014



crumbs!



YIKES! If you're the speaker at a major international conference and happen to be prone to slips of the tongue, for goodness' sake, employ the old rock technique of writing the city or country's name on the back of something close to hand.

Don't make the mistake of the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, who wanted to thank Austria for Vienna's hosting a major UN conference about developing landlocked countries, and instead thanked Australia, *Associated Press* reported.

He recovered well, however, apologising later by saying he knew there weren't any kangaroos in Austria, the publication reported, which really goes to show if you've got a good recovery, you might even get away with calling any country Australia - even New Zealand, as **THIS CLIP** from John Oliver shows people often do.

Sheppard's coo

STRATEGIC changes have been announced by InterContinental Hotels Group to its regional leadership team in the growing Asia, Middle East and Africa (AMEA) region.

These include Karin Sheppard, who has been appointed chief operating officer (coo) for AMEA.

In her new role, Sheppard will oversee the operations and performance of over 100 hotels in more than 10 countries across the brands.

Sheppard will relocate from Singapore to Sydney and take on her new role from 01 Jan.

Como dumps pick up artist

FOLLOWING an online petition signed by more than 10,242 people, the Como Melbourne Hotel has confirmed it will not proceed as the event venue for Real Social Dynamics (RSD).

The petition called for the hotel not to host RSD executive coach Julien Blanc's event on Thursday.

The Change.org petition said Blanc had "made a living by teaching men how to violate women through physical and emotional abuse", citing Blanc's Twitter account, which features pictures of him with his hands around women's necks using the hash tag #ChokingGirlsAroundTheWorld, and videos of men pushing women's heads towards their groin.

Via its Twitter account, the Como wrote on Tuesday that, following an objective review, it was in the process of advising RSD that it would not proceed as its event venue.

The Hilton Garden Inn in Texas followed suit later in the day, tweeting that it had also cancelled another RSD seminar due to be held on the same day.

Tourism Oz briefing

TOURISM Australia is to host a series of industry briefings and webinars which will free to Australian operators.

The briefings in each state and territory would give an overview of the organisation's business events activity and partnership opportunities, as well as its activity and market insights, while the webinars would cover various topics and include live discussions, the organisation said.

To register, **CLICK HERE**.



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Gray's Say

Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular *Business Events News* feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.



LINKED IN OR OUT?

SOCIAL media is something that is touching all our lives and is being used more and more often to change attitudes; to the way in which we think and act. According to a recent report from Elsevier "... brand communities established on social media have positive effects on community markers (i.e. shared consciousness, shared rituals and traditions, and obligations to society), which have positive effects on value creation practices (i.e. social networking, community engagement, impressions management, and brand use)".

Where 'word of mouth' used to be the most effective form of promotion, social media seems to have taken over. Like many businesspeople, I have a LinkedIn account and belong to a number of LinkedIn communities but I am gradually divesting myself of them. Frankly, I resent people using their membership of such groups to sell me products or services; this is not the reason I joined them.

But what has been more obvious lately is the number of incentive (and meetings) industry wannabes who apparently have no idea how to deal with the needs of their clients and are hoping that someone else out there in 'cloud land' will tell them what they should know as a result of their training.

Social media is not a substitute for experience or the knowledge gained by working in the incentive industry and learning from a professional practitioner.

In Melbourne, incentive industry professionals have always shared or exchanged information when to do so will solve a problem with a client or supplier...or even an element of a program. But these are professionals and not individuals hoping to start in the industry by gleaning information and passing it off as original thought to their clients.

Many of us have known each other for years and have shared experiences which emphasise our desire to help and there is no risk of losing a client. Even those new to the industry are soon absorbed into this group because they started their careers working for one or other of us. We didn't need social media.

This is entirely different from a total stranger, who may even be on the other side of the world, asking how to do the sort of things I, as a professional, learned from experience.

Social media used as a quick fix is a recipe for disaster.

Peter Gray can be contacted at peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net.



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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia
Street address: 4/41 Rawson St, Epping NSW 2121 Australia
P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) F: 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Publisher: Bruce Piper

Editor: Jill Varley info@businesseventsnews.com.au

Deputy Editor: Alex Walls

Advertising and Marketing: Sean Harrigan and Katrina Ford advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper accounts@businesseventsnews.com.au





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Business Events News guide to 2014/15 Christmas venues is the place to showcase!
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