

MEETINGS BEAT

Radisson Launches Inventory Search Engine

Radisson Hotels & Resorts last month introduced a new online meeting services suite that enables meeting planners to enter their specific event criteria into a search engine to find a match in the chain's inventory of group facilities and services. Radisson inked a deal with **PlanSoft**, now **OnVantage Inc.** (*Meetings Today*, Sept. 20), to power the Web-based tool. Meeting planners also can submit electronic requests for proposals free of charge to Radisson hotels. OnVantage brings 180,000 members that were registered under PlanSoft and a network of more than 50 meeting and convention Web sites that utilize their facility database, sourcing and RFP tools. Meeting planners are able to access 360-degree panoramic views of Radisson facilities, scalable floor plans and contact information through the site. Other brands of Minneapolis-based **Carlson Hotels Worldwide** will offer the online service in 2005. Carlson owns five hotel brands, including Radisson, **Regent International Hotels** and **Park Plaza Hotels & Resorts**.

Pharm. Cos. Offered Free Remote Conferencing

Tele- and Webconferencing services provider **Infinite Conferencing** last month announced the industry's first promotional offering for pharmaceutical companies. Millburn, N.J.-based Infinite is offering free, 30-day trial use of its Webconferencing and "reservationless" teleconferencing for groups up to 10 attendees, with no time limit. "Since the average pharmaceutical sales call is only 120 seconds, speed and information are crucial to this audience," said Keith Maddox, president of Infinite Conferencing, in a company release. "Most of these professionals have Web access, and early morning or after hours Webconferences provide them with another opportunity to get the information they need to make informed decisions." Trial participants will receive wallet cards that include the access codes needed for conference calls that do not require extensive planning.

MPI Launches European Fundraising Drive

MPI Foundation Europe late last month announced its aim to raise €500,000 (US\$664,450) in the first capital campaign for the European meeting industry. The fundraising drive, called Focus 2006, will conclude at MPI's 2006 Professional Education Conference Europe in March 2006. "The result of this capital campaign will be far-reaching, and will benefit all meeting professionals throughout Europe as we raise awareness of the meetings profession and prove our strategic value to organizations," said Eric Rozenberg, chair of MPI's European Council, in an association release. New programs from the funds are to focus on trends and identification of future needs of meeting professionals to effectively perform in their positions. The drive already has raised €314,402 (\$417,589), including €107,000 (\$142,117) from **IMEX**, €100,000 (\$132,820) from **Reed Travel Exhibitions**, €50,000 (\$66,410) from **Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide** and €17,000 (\$22,579) from **Hilton International**. MPI has 1,300 European members and chapters in 10 European countries.

First Virtual Upgrades Conferencing Tools

Software provider **First Virtual Communications** on Nov. 15 released the latest version of its Click to Meet media communications solution, providing new **IBM** Lotus groupware integration and enhanced **Microsoft** integration via Microsoft Live Communications Server. Click to Meet 4.1 and Conference Server 7.3.100 enable users to access Windows Messenger, MSN Messenger and IBM Lotus Instant Messaging as launching points for Web meetings. Click to Meet sends an instant message to contacts, inviting them to join the user's Webconference. Duncan Campbell, vice president of marketing for Redwood City, Calif.-based First Virtual Communications, said Click to Meet 4.1 is a step to improve the integration of the product with groupware and messaging environments. "With the ability to add real-time voice, video, and data communications to either Microsoft LCS or IBM Lotus groupware environments, we leverage the directory and messaging systems already deployed to simplify conference set-up, scheduling and participation," Campbell said in a company release.

—Corrie Dosh