

ME PRODUCTIONS

AS PUBLISHED IN:

PharmExec.com

July 2003

Meetings: Hotels vs Conference Centers

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"With the new PhRMA guidelines, it's more nuts and bolts for meetings," says Lisa Jebb, who has worked with pharma companies years as vice-president of sales for ME Productions, a Florida-based event planning and destination company. "That means they're extravagant functions; they're trying to be more cost-effective in training doctors when they bring them in."

Her events—clinical trial investigator and new product education meetings that typically draw 75-150 doctors—are usually held at conference centers and adhere to strict guidelines. "No frills," she says. "We feed them and maybe add some background music."

On the other hand, it is no holds barred when Jebb plans non-MD events, whose budgets haven't changed much. She still plans sales meetings and special events, including a recent grand opening for Nabi Biopharmaceuticals' \$90 million manufacturing plant in Raton, Florida, in April 2002.

"Conference centers and hotels are being used more for doctors' training meetings as opposed to resorts, which are still being used for training meetings and incentive programs," she says. "Companies still need to reward their sales forces to keep them motivated." Those meetings range in size from 20 at the executive level, to 1,200-1,500 in a sales training group.