



When an hour isn't quite enough, but an overnight's not required, day meeting centers can provide an ideal alternative for any type of conference. More and more groups are discovering that these multifaceted

facilities offer the right mix of dedicated meeting space, sophisticated technology, high-quality food and beverage, and first-rate service, and at a cost that does not become bogged down by the need to meet a room block.

"Unlike a hotel, which tries to be all things to all people, we're more of a dedi-

cated environment," says Tracey Taverna, director of sales at the Conference Center at Waltham Woods in Waltham, MA.

"We're more serious in many ways. You won't find kids running around in the lobby and a bar mitzvah going on in a ballroom." While there's nothing wrong with kids and parties, many groups need to make the most of both their time and money. "For some, their objectives are very specific and their time is limited," says Taverna. And having the biggest, most teched-out meeting room will mean nothing if attendees fail to concentrate on their subject at hand.

Convenience also adds to a day center's appeal. "We're off Route 128 and the

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-Tracey Taverna
Director of Sales
Waltham Woods
Waltham, MA

DAILY ROUTINE

By Marc Boisclair

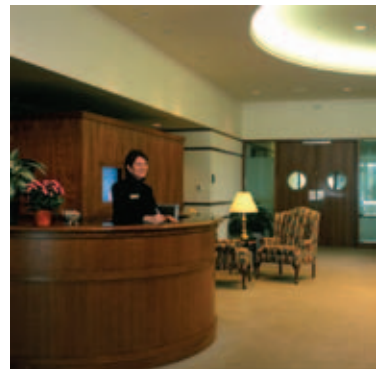
QUALITY, CONVENIENCE, AND COST MAKE DAY CENTERS AN APPEALING CHOICE.

Massachusetts Turnpike in the middle of a high-tech area, and have 300-plus complimentary parking spaces, as opposed to paying for parking in Boston,” says Taverna. “We also do a lot of science, biology, and pharmaceutical training, and draw people from as far west as Springfield.”

And from a cost perspective, day centers can prove attractive in several ways. For starters, there’s no room block to worry about negotiating. “With a hotel, if you have no guest rooms to bring to the table then it can be difficult to find the meeting space,” says Steve Brennan, executive director of the Harris Conference Center at Central Piedmont Community College

in Charlotte, NC. “Since we don’t have guest rooms, we don’t have that burden.” What day centers often do have, however, are excellent food and beverage facilities, plus a place for attendees to relax after work, such as fitness centers and tennis and basketball courts.

However, those who do need a minimum amount of room nights (e.g., for guest speakers or presenters) can usually find them close by, with transportation, and at a reasonable rate. “We have a handful of hotels that we refer business to on a regular basis,” says Brennan. “Some have a special negotiated price and if you mention our facility then they’ll give you a discount.” (cont. next pg.)



Right Column: Interior views of Waltham Woods, Waltham, MA

For those groups with very specific technology needs, computer labs offer a unique opportunity within the day center niche. Venues such as Denver's Quest Learning & Conference Center and MicroTek, which runs 250 computer labs internationally, come with both meeting space and built-in, high-end technology required for certain educational, medical and IT training.

"A lot of groups want to manage their own events, but if you do this in a hotel it can run up the costs considerably," says MicroTek president Bill Taylor. "We offer them one point of contact and a consistent environment for

training, typically in downtown metro areas, with full-time technical staff and national support as well." That can translate to a better bottom line on any number of ancillary items.

"It's a cost and time saving for the client, as opposed to renting dozens of pieces of equipment and hiring service techs for set up and presentations," says Taylor. "Instead, our tag line is 'just show up and teach.'" **MEET**



Waltham Woods, Waltham, MA



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