

An aerial photograph of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, at dusk. The Burj Khalifa is the most prominent feature on the right side, reaching towards the sky. In the foreground, a large, illuminated fountain with multiple jets of water is visible. The city's skyline is filled with numerous skyscrapers, some of which are lit up. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, indicating the time is either sunset or sunrise. Overlaid on the image is a white geometric pattern consisting of several interconnected lines forming a network of triangles and polygons, with small white circles at the vertices of these shapes.

Headquarters
DUBAI
AHEAD OF TOMORROW

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DUBAI LEADING THE WAY

Sometimes it takes looking at the past to see where you'll go in the future. For Dubai, half a century brought change that transformed a tiny fishing village into one of the leading cities across the globe for both business and tourism. Lane Nieset reports

Taking a look at old photographs, it's hard to picture a small airstrip in the 1960s that's now morphed into the busiest airport in the world.

This year, the Dubai International Airport (DXB) expects to welcome 90 million passengers and plans on hitting the 100 million mark by 2020. Just stepping off the plane and walking through Terminal 3, I could see why Dubai's making a name for itself as a city of superlatives, boasting the best (or largest) in everything for an experience that seems larger than life—until you're actually there living it.

The Emirate was founded on oil and quickly developed into a city known for the tallest buildings and most exclusive hotels, aiming to be the best at any goal it set forward. This is still the case as the Dubai aligns with the UAE Vision 2021 to become one of the top countries in the world—as well as one of the

most visited—ranking fourth last year over destinations like Paris.

As Steen Jakobsen, Dubai Business Events Director, puts it: *"Dubai is a product of the people living here and testament to the fact that great things can be achieved when vision is matched with hard work."*

Dubai already has one of the most connected economies in the world and reigns as the Middle East's business and knowledge hub, but 2015 as the "Year of Innovation" should help propel the entire country into the top 20 Global Innovation index thanks to the six-year National Innovation Strategy.

With UAE Vision 2021, the country plans to build a competitive and resilient economy amongst the Emiratis with an identity focused on fostering

knowledge and innovation, as well as sustainability, honing in on seven main sectors: renewable energy, transport, education, health, technology, water and space.

Part of the new legislature ushered in, the Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone will establish two new projects: a "Creative Community" in the new Dubai Design District and an "Innovation Hub" in the Dubai Internet City. Once the Innovation Hub is underway, it will be home to 15,000 companies ranging from start-ups to technology labs and smart buildings, with almost 93,000 sqm of workspace planned for early 2017. International events, in turn, will help bring together both the Emiratis as well as leading experts from around the globe to discuss and drive change and growth that will continue to expand Dubai's potential for centuries to come. **HD**

DUBAI IN A NUTSHELL

- Received 14.2 million international travelers in 2015
- Ranked No. 1 in the Middle East by the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA), and shifted up 19 places from number 63 to 44 on international rankings
- Ranked 22nd in the world in Ease of Doing Business
- 20 new hotels opened in 2015, bringing the number of rooms up to 98,000 (spanning 1- to 5-star accommodations)
- Easily accessible with nonstop flights to 280 destinations at Dubai International Airport (DXB), the busiest in the world in terms of international traffic, with 78 million passengers passing through in 2015
- One of the top 20 safest cities in the world, according to the MasterCard Global Destinations Cities Index

DUBAI'S DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE HUB

Dubai is a young city, but that doesn't just go for its buildings. Forty-five percent of the population is under the age of 29 and are what the tech world likes to call "digital natives." In a sense, it's this generation that will be building tomorrow. "We're preparing graduates to contribute to Dubai and add value to society," explains Bryan Gilroy, Assistant Provost and Campus Director of Dubai's Zayed University. "You no longer need to learn a particular set of skills; you need to be able to do new things."

Education is just one of Dubai's many well-established knowledge hubs, which also includes sectors like healthcare, technology and transport, as well as some of the rising realms like renewable energy, water and space. Dubai is on track to position itself as one of the leading destinations on the globe in these fields, not only developing new, homegrown business events to support key scientific sectors, but also looking to international conferences and meetings to drive the agenda and share latest findings in these fields.

Last year was a strong one in terms of wins, and 2016 is no different, gearing up to host major events like the Congress of the International Society of Blood Transfusion and the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society. By working with the overall UAE Vision 2021 of developing this knowledge economy, Dubai is perpetuating growth and discussion amongst sectors like science and technology, both at home and abroad.

While there's no lack of state-of-the-art meeting places in Dubai, the city is aligning the goals of this vision bringing sectors together in a way where they can not only be a topic of discussion, they can also be the host for business events.

The perfect example falls under the education sector. The Dubai campus of Zayed University, with a student population that's almost 100 percent Emirati nationals, is working with local organisations like Dubai Business Events to host international conferences and lectures that bring experts to the city while getting students involved at the same time. In the first quarter of 2016, the university will host the NACADA International Conference (academic advising conference) and the meeting of the GCC Secretariat for Special Needs at GCC Universities and Higher Education Institutions.

Dubai is already the no. 1 business events destination in the region, hosting 42 percent of association

42%
THE PERCENTAGE OF ASSOCIATION CONFERENCES DUBAI HOSTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

conferences in the Middle East. One-fifth of visitors in town are there for business and while one goal is for these travelers to share knowledge, another is for them to have a great experience while they're doing it, consuming the city at various touch points. From the airport to the venues, Dubai Mall to meeting rooms, everything is designed to be smooth and seamless for attendees, enticing them to come back for round two—but this time it's less work and more play. ▷

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DUBAI ASSOCIATION CENTRE

One of the ways Dubai is establishing its role as a knowledge hub is through associations, offering guidance and services from a local to an international level for associations that set up shop in the city. Here are just a few of the facts and figures (and major perks!) about opening an office at the Dubai Association Centre.

STYLISH SUITES: The Association Centre offers furnished office suites in its headquarters at the historic Sheikh Rashid Tower, Dubai's first skyscraper. Join tenants like FedEx, General Motors and Lufthansa while receiving amenities and services like health insurance and work visas for the entire staff.

MANAGEMENT SERVICES: You can work with any association management company of your choosing, but the centre's strategic partner, MCI, offers a number of services for associations from financial management to strategic planning and operations, marketing, and creative and IT assistance.

EVENT PLANNING ASSISTANCE: As part of the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing Family, Dubai Business Events' main priority is to position Dubai as a premier business events destination. The team of 15 offer free service helping with meetings and events in the Emirate, from site inspections to sponsorships.



Dubai International Financial Centre



FOUR ON-THE-SPOT QUESTIONS WITH DUBAI BUSINESS EVENTS DIRECTOR STEEN JAKOBSEN

As Dubai embraces its identity and growth as a knowledge hub, Dubai Business Events Director Steen Jakobsen talks about how this role will shape events to come in the city.



STEEN
JAKOBSEN

What other projects do you have on the horizon that will widen Dubai's offerings both as a knowledge hub and business events destination?

Dubai World Trade Centre (the exhibition and convention centre) added another 15,000 sqm. A lot of hotels are opening and most will have huge banquet facilities. What is also on the horizon is the plan for the Expo 2020 site, which of course will host the Expo during those six months, but it's also building built with the time beyond the Expo

in mind, ensuring the facilities there will find use after the Expo is over.

What can planners expect this new site to function as after Expo 2020 wraps up?

Eventually the plan is to utilise the site as the new venue for all of our large trade exhibitions, so they will take place there and the existing convention and exhibition centre will be converted into a more specialized conference center. **HD**

How is Dubai's development as a knowledge hub driving business events to the Emirate?

Dubai and the UAE have a strong objective of transforming into a knowledge society and they know it will be knowledge, creativity and innovation driving the future. We try to support that overall agenda for the country and the city by driving international conferences and meetings that can help support Dubai's growth and development as a knowledge hub.

Can you talk more about this growth of the city as a knowledge hub and what we can expect to see in the next few years?

We just came out of 2015, which was the "Year of Innovation," and that was also the year the UAE government launched their six-year innovation policy that sets out to position Dubai as one of the top cities in the world for innovation. It's a policy backed up by a 600-billion-dirham investment into innovation initiatives looking at areas like regulation, education, universities and knowledge centres.



Atrium, Zayed university

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE FUTURE

Dubai aims to be the number one business events destination in the world, but the city is starting the growth process from the ground up right at home. The Emirate is honing in on events and congresses around the globe that will help strengthen seven key scientific and technology sectors, creating a lasting legacy there and abroad.

Dubai continues to rise among the ICCA rankings, increasing the number of international association meetings by 51 percent in 2014 as the host of 56 events. Last year was also one of the city's strongest for business events, but Dubai wants to not only grow the market share of existing events, the city wants to do so in a way that aligns with the mindset of UAE Vision 2021's knowledge economy goal.

With one-third of the world living within a four-hour flight, an airport capacity of 90 million, and almost 100,000 hotel rooms, attracting and hosting groups isn't a problem for the Emirate. Five years ago, the city also set up the Al Safer Congress Ambassadors Programme designed to bring high-profile international meetings and congresses to Dubai by connecting organizations to their local peers and stakeholders through ambassadors. More than 150 "ambassadors" from local associations, government institutions and businesses work hand-in-hand with Dubai Business Events to support these international bids.

This year, the 34th International Congress of the International Society of Blood Transfusion will bring 4,000 delegates to Dubai, one of the major wins for the Emirate as the city beat out other potential hosts



Art Dubai 2014

like Paris and Copenhagen. Another one of the major events lined up for 2016 will take place in September when the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) hosts its Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition (ATCE) in Dubai, bringing 10,000 attendees for its first-ever event in the Middle East (see more on this event in just a few pages).

One element of the UAE's innovation strategy is to attract more events in these scientific sectors, but another is to become one of the most innovative nations in the world by 2021. With these major international conferences, as well as the projects put forward during 2015's Year of Innovation, the city is well on its way to lead the global pack in these sectors. **>**



SEVEN WAYS DUBAI IS LEADING THE PACK

In 2013, the UAE ranked 35 in the Global Innovation Index, but the country plans to be in the top 20 by 2021, as well as grow non-oil real GDP up from 3.5 to 5 percent. Here are just a few of the ways Dubai is aligning with this goal, drawing the best minds and conferences from around the globe focusing on these seven sectors:



RENEWABLE ENERGY, TECHNOLOGY & WATER

A main highlight of the innovation policy revolves around this sector, as Dubai and the UAE creates centers for energy storage solutions and expands solar energy research programs. The country will also launch a national program for water desalination working with advanced technology, all part of a "next practice" approach.

SPACE

One facet of the space sector will involve exploration, but the city plans to build a network of technology that also includes satellite communications, as well as conduct research specific to space technology in terrestrial applications. The UAE has already invested AED 20 billion into this sector, launching the UAE Space Agency in 2014 with a goal of building and bringing the first Arabic-Islamic unmanned probe to Mars by 2021. Abu Dhabi will be home to the largest (and first) space center in the Middle East and North Africa once the project is completed, allowing the region to host space trips that fall under both scientific and touristic interests.

EDUCATION

Almost 1.5 billion Euros will be invested in research centres at academic institutions across the UAE focusing on the development of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Universities such as Zayed are not only promoting this idea of innovation, they're doing it in a very 21st century way. Students are trained to think independently and as leaders so they can utilize this knowledge post-graduation and contribute positively to Dubai's society.

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The Archive in Safa Park

HEALTH

At the 10th World Health Tourism Congress, Dubai was named "Destination of the Year," an award that shows just how connected Dubai's tourism is with its health-care sector. Once again using 2020 as a target year, Dubai plans to become one of the world's top medical tourism hubs. The initial target in 2014 was to attract half a million medical tourists per year, but in the first half of 2015 alone, the city brought in a whopping 260,000.

Dubai already boasts over 2,700 top-notch medical facilities and specialist surgeries ranging from sports medicine to cosmetic and spa treatments, but the city is continuing to expand its offerings. Ten more hospitals are in the works and the first phase of the 300-bed hospital and medical university, Fakeeh Academic Medical Centre, is slated to open in 2017. Free zone district Dubai Healthcare City, home to over 130 clinical facilities, also plans to tack on a 2 million sqm expansion featuring medical services and hospitality.



Dubai Hospital



TRANSPORT

The main goal here is efficiency, developing new services and modes of travel by air and sea that save time and ultimately improve infrastructure. The UAE has already proved success through its national airline companies, Emirates and Etihad, some of the top in terms of air travel, and currently manages 65 seaports on six continents. With Dubai's Tourism Vision to attract 20 million visitors per year by 2020, the city is streamlining its infrastructure with new and existing developments that not only make it easy for delegates to get from one meeting to the next, they can also quickly jet off and enjoy the Emirate once the conference wraps up. 

CASE STUDIES

THE WORLD IS IN DUBAI

Every year, Dubai hosts many association conferences and meetings. Below are three emblematic ones that took place in 2015 and 2016.

GLOBAL WOMEN'S FORUM: A FIRST FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

Dubai was deemed the destination of choice for the Global Women's Forum, marking the first time the event took place in the Middle East and Africa. Over the course of two days from February 23-24, over 2,000 delegates from 70 countries met at the Madinat Jumeirah Hotel to discuss diversity in the workplace and how women can take action becoming more valuable to society.

The plan for the Global Women's Forum Dubai 2016 slowly unfolded over the past three years thanks to the help of Dubai Women Establishment and Women's Forum for the Economy & Society. The process started with Dubai Business Events' (DBE) sales mission at the Mandarin Oriental in Paris in June 2012, meeting with the Women's Forum for the

first time and later attending one of its events in Deauville with a delegation led by Her Excellency Sheikha Lubna. The Women's Forum Paris team then met with the Dubai Women Establishment and Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimi the following spring for a site tour arranged by DBE. In 2014, the city won the bid for the 2016 edition of the Women's Forum, working around the theme "Let's Innovate!".

One of the main goals of the conference was to re-evaluate and strengthen the role of women in society, as well as host discussions on how the development of particular innovative ideas can serve to raise the profile of women in business and economy, both in the present and future. Throughout the two-day event, delegates attended meetings

and workshops with topics like Rising Talents and CEO Champions, with discussions falling under five pillars: Achieving, Creating, Giving, Energizing and Sustaining. The highlight of the event and one of the most successful factors was the Discovery section, designed to inspire future generations of women and show the impact of their contributions on society, supporting Dubai's effort of leading the way as a knowledge hub for the world.

As CEO for the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society, Jacqueline Franjou, said in her closing speech at the event: *'Global Women's Forum Dubai has also succeeded as a bridge, a new platform for cross-cultural cooperation, demonstrating how the empowerment of women unlocks a rush of economic growth.'*

WORLD GOVERNMENT SUMMIT: MOLDING FUTURE MOVERS & SHAKERS

President Barack Obama was just one of the many distinguished keynote speakers who came together for the fourth World Government Summit in Dubai, which took place February 8-10. The three-day event brought over 4,000 governmental leaders from 90 countries to the Madinat Jumeirah Hotel, offering over 50 sessions and more than 100 speakers in the Innovation Pavilion, including the President of Rwanda, President of the World Bank Group and Former President of Ireland.

Drawing senior government officials, decision and policy makers, and thought leaders and researchers to the Emirate, the summit revolves around three themes: future governments, government innovation and the development of government services. Fifty-seven countries participated in the UAE Drones for Good Award, launched by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed at the 2014 summit, which encourages the partnership of governments and technology universities and R&D centers to design new services that

can enhance all aspects of public life from medicine to social services. The event also featured the Best M-Government Service Award, part of the Smart Government initiative, which aims to link government and technology through the creation of smart phone apps.

SOCIETY OF PETROLEUM ENGINEERS ANNUAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION: OIL & GAS'S BEST MINDS MINGLE

This fall, the Society of Petroleum Engineers is bringing its Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition (ATCE) to the Middle East for the first time since it got started 91 years ago. Known as the premier technical conference when it comes to oil and gas production, the three-day event will take place at the Dubai World Trade Centre from September 26-28, bringing an estimated 10,000 delegates to the Emirate.

Throughout the event's existence, more than half a million of the industry's best minds have met to discuss oil and gas exploration and production. The largest event so far took place in North America in 2013 in New Orleans, bringing 12,000

attendees; 500 exhibitors showcasing the latest tools and technologies; and presentations of over 400 peer-selection papers highlighting trends, best practices, and innovation in exploration and production. SPE has also hosted ATCE in European destinations such as Milan and Amsterdam, and this year Dubai was up against Calgary, Canada and Anaheim, California.

DBE began the process of attracting the event to the city back in 2012, when the bid was first submitted. ATCE was awarded to Dubai one year later and DBE has spent the past two years delegate boosting with a booth at congresses in both Amsterdam and Houston, where SPE has an office.

As the largest member organization for managers, engineers, scientists and other professionals involved in the upstream segment of oil and gas, SPE bringing its annual conference to Dubai means that some of the leading international professionals will be meeting in the Emirate collaborating at workshops and offering forums and training courses.

As Jeff Spath, 2014 SPE President, said in an announcement after the bid was received: *"SPE's membership is dispersed globally. More than 11,000 of our professional members and 2,200 of our student members reside in the Middle East. Dubai's position as the crossroads of east and west make it an ideal meeting point for our global industry."*



DEVELOPMENTS DEFYING ALL LIMITS

Conferences in Dubai begin before you even take off, with everything from an Emirates flight to Dubai International's Terminal 3 being part of the experience.

The number of passengers touching down in Dubai's airports grows at an average of 13 per cent each year—and hit 78 million in 2015—so it's no surprise Dubai aims to "make the journey as rewarding as the event," as Emirates airlines says.

Dubai International Airport's Terminal 2 expanded last summer doubling its capacity, and when Terminal 1's Concourse D is completed, the airport will be able to accommodate 90 million passengers per year. Part of Dubai Airports' AED 3.35 billion project for 2020, the new 150,000sqm concourse will feature nine lounges, 20 new restaurants and 32 gates serving over 70 international carriers.

Dubai's second airport, Al Maktoum International aims to break another record with expansion plans to become the largest airport in the world. With a revolutionary concept of creating smaller airports within a larger one (for an airport-within-an-airport feel), DWC will be able reach a capacity upwards of 150 million per year.

Ninety percent of the global population is within a nonstop flight to Dubai, so it's only natural that as the airports expand, so will the airlines. In barely a

decade, **Emirates** has jumped from a fleet of 80 to 247 aircraft, with over 51 million passengers in 2015. Thanks to the size of its fleet and association with Dubai Inc. (the conglomerate of government-owned companies), Emirates can offer associations an integrated Dubai experience that starts in the air and continues when they touch down on Dubai ground, with flexible and tailored service to accommodate large groups from around the globe.

Groups can customize everything from in-flight entertainment and seat covers to onboard catering, with offerings including logo-emblazoned welcome cupcakes. Emirates can even tailor flight crews based on nationalities and languages to meet the demands of a group, with one of the best examples being the 2014 Chinese Nu Skin incentive trip to Dubai, flying 14,500 attendees on 77 flights (including two A380 charters) with customised amenities and Chinese crews.

EVERYTHING ON EMIRATES

- Flights from 150 cities on six continents, with the majority being just eight hours or less from Dubai
- Six to eight new destinations added each year, including two of the longest direct flights in the world added this year to Auckland and Panama City (17.5 hours)
- Retiring 26 old aircraft in 2016 and replacing them with 36 new ones, so the entire fleet will be an average of 5.6 years old
- World's largest fleet of wide-bodied aircraft and the only airline with an A380-dedicated terminal
- Staff of "globalistas" from 160 nationalities speaking over 55 languages

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VENUES IN DUBAI CITY OF SUPERLATIVES

Dubai's motto may be "Discover All That's Possible," but with the amount of cranes hanging over the city, "If Your Build It, They Will Come" seems like a much better fit. If Dubai isn't already home to something that is the tallest, longest or largest in the world, it's probably next on the agenda.

The city continues to expand at rapid fire pace with plans on practically every inch of soil, but older institutions aren't being left out, either. The **Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC)**, for instance, is the largest MICE venue in the region, bringing 2.45 million visitors a year and hosting more than 500 exhibitions and events. As the number and size of events continue to increase, DWTC is expanding as well, with plans for a 15,500 sqm extension to be complete by the first part of 2016. Once these three new halls are finished, event space will add up to more than 122,000 sqm.

When the country opens its first opera house this year in Downtown Dubai next to the dancing fountain, it will also be the centerpiece for the UAE's new cultural centre, the **Dubai Opera District**. The 2,000-seat **Dubai Opera**, modeled after traditional wooden dhows that sail along the Dubai Creek, will not only play host to concerts and theatre productions, the space will also operate as a venue for trade shows and exhibitions, as well as sit-down

dinners for up to 1,000. The new pedestrianised district will also feature luxury "art" hotels, a museum of modern art, design studios and galleries, and shops and restaurants.

In October, the AED 10.5 billion destination **Dubai Parks & Resorts** will simultaneously open the gates to its three theme parks, earning the city yet another Guinness World Record. Spread across more than 2 million sqm on Sheikh Zayed Road, the year-round entertainment destination will feature the film-inspired motiingate Dubai, LEGOLAND Dubai and the first Bollywood-themed park, **Bollywood Parks Dubai**. Groups can also play at the parks thanks to plenty of tailor-made MICE opportunities, privatizing sections for after-hours parties and arranging character meet-and-greets. **Bollywood Parks' Broadway-style Rajmahal Theatre** will offer seats for up to 850, while the al fresco shopping and dining area **Riverland Dubai** just next door will have capacity to host groups of up to 1,500 along the river.

15,500
THE NUMBER OF SQM DWTC WILL ADD TO ITS EXISTING PORTFOLIO

In 2018, delegates meeting in the city will have a chance to glimpse directly into Dubai's future at the aptly named **Museum of the Future**. Partly built using 3D printing to create a design that will change with the times and latest technological advances, the museum will align with the city's role as a knowledge hub, hosting advanced courses, workshops, talks and events, bringing together the best scientific minds and groups interested in everything from the discussion to the testing of new products and ideas. ▷



Burj Al Arab



Dubai Opera



Dubai World Trade Centre



Burj Khalifa



Palm Jumeirah



Museum of the Future



One&Only The Palm



Taj Dubai



St. Regis Dubai



SKY-HIGH SLEEPING & MEETING

Dubai can be divided into three parts: Old Dubai, Downtown and Future Dubai. Just look at Palm Jumeirah, a palm tree-shaped island with 17 fronds, and you'll see a glimpse of Dubai's future. Think of this as Dubai's version of Beverly Hills 90210, one of the most exclusive postal codes in the Emirate. When the first batch of homes were built, they sold out in just 30 minutes (and stars like David Beckham were some of the buyers).

Twenty minutes south of the airport, **Palm Jumeirah** currently has 16 hotels up and running, with plans for 30 in total by Expo 2020. Every haute brand you can name is here (or about to be here) from the largest hotel in Dubai, the 1,539-room **Atlantis, The Palm**, to **Fairmont** and **Kempinski**. There couldn't be a better spot for views of new Dubai than from five-star **One&Only The Palm's** skyline deck at 101, where we started our first morning in the Emirate at one of the city's chicest new venues. It's not hard to relax here day or night, with champagne and seafood bars, waterfront tables, and the resident DJ fueling beach party vibes that would fit in perfectly in a Mediterranean hotspot like Saint-Tropez. Groups can also take the party on the water jetting off from the hotel's private marina onboard a boat with **First Yacht**, the largest charter fleet in the UAE.

The 160-story Burj Khalifa is one of Dubai's major attractions, and now groups can get an even more VIP look from the highest observation deck in the world on the 148th floor, accessed by its own elevator. The new **At the Top, Burj Khalifa SKY** serves more as a lounge than a look out point (like the one below on the 124th floor), offering refreshments and canapés while groups take in the city from the world's tallest building.

One of the best views of Dubai may be from the Burj Khalifa, but if you want a view of the tower itself, head just across the street to the new **Taj Dubai**. Boasting the first members-only Chambers club outside of India, this exclusive space can transform into an intimate meeting room for up to 20. For a larger event, take the party to the Tesoro terrace overlooking the Downtown skyline (and that stunning skyscraper) for groups of up to 40 outside or 120 inside the restaurant.

Nearby, the luxurious **Palace Downtown Dubai**, part of **The Address Hotels + Resorts**, is another winner when it comes to stunning outdoor venues. Groups of up to 120 can dine on the viewing deck (while snapping up loads of photos) overlooking the dancing fountain and lit-up Burj Khalifa.

AL HABTOOR, THE NEWEST CITY IN TOWN

Falling somewhere in the Downtown category, Dubai is creating a "city-within-a-city" on Sheikh Zayed Road. While in town, I had the chance to dine at one of the first components of **Al Habtoor City**, the 234-room **St. Regis Dubai**, home to eight restaurants, including three-Michelin star Chef Jean-George Vongerichten's JG Steakhouse. When two other Starwood hotels open later this year—the 356-room **W Dubai** and 1,004-room **The Westin Dubai**—the interconnected properties will offer over 1,500 rooms, as well as a variety of meeting spaces. The Westin in particular is geared specifically with groups in mind, with 15 meeting rooms and the 1,425 sqm Al Joud ballroom, offering space for up to 1,200. Delegates can also find plenty of entertainment between meetings on the marina waterfront, dining at restaurants and cafes bearing brands like Bentley or catching a performance at the New York City transplant Jazz at Lincoln Centre.

With a goal of bringing 20 million people by 2020, it's no wonder hotels are popping up left and right, with 98,000 rooms and an additional 15,000 on the way. Don't think that all are five-star, either. The government launched a special incentive to grow the mid-market segment, with many of the new hotels being 3- and 4-star properties appealing particularly to the business events sector. 

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO ACCESS SERVICES RELATED TO BUSINESS EVENT DEVELOPMENT, DESTINATION EXPERTISE, CONVENTION PLANNING, ATTENDANCE BUILDING AND ONSITEW EVENT SERVICING, VISIT DUBAIBUSINESSEVENTS.AE, CALL +971 600 55 5559 OR EMAIL ASKDBE@DUBAITOURISM.AE.

WHERE INFRASTRUCTURE MEETS INNOVATION

The regional commercial hub and gateway between East and West, Dubai is a city built on innovation and infused with opportunities. The city's diverse knowledge base and community of trained professionals make Dubai the ideal location for association conferences, corporate meetings and incentive events. Direct access from over 280 destinations worldwide, an array of venues, over 98,000 hotel rooms in all categories and numerous exciting activities in and around Dubai make this city the most remarkable destination for successful business events.



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