

Correction Notice: CMEE Conference Date Update

In our previous newsletter, we mistakenly listed the CMEE Conference date as taking place in April. Please note the correct date is August. We apologize for the confusion and appreciate your understanding.

We look forward to seeing you in August!



Greetings!

Summer is here, and as temperatures rise, so does the energy across our industry. It's a vibrant, high-energy time in the meetings and events industry, with destination site visits and conferences, as well as client events, in full swing. There's a palpable buzz as we embrace new opportunities, fresh trends, and renewed connections.

In this edition of Suite Talk, we're covering a lot of ground to keep you informed and inspired. We're jumping right into the thick of things with this edition, kicking things off with industry trends. Followed by our Hotel Highlights featuring three standout properties: the sleek sophistication of **Le Germain Toronto**, the timeless luxury of **Shangri-La**, and the historically charming **Hotel Nelligan**. Whether you're planning your next board meeting or incentive getaway, these properties are worth a closer look.

Our Client Event Recap will take you behind the scenes of recent happenings and, we're also spotlighting upcoming Industry Events you won't want to miss.

One trend we're especially excited about? The growing shift toward luxury and boutique venues. Planners are moving away from one-size-fits-all options and embracing spaces with personality, soul, and a strong sense of place. We explore why this movement is gaining momentum and what it means for the future of event design.

So grab your iced coffee (or glass of rosé), and enjoy this edition of *Suite Talk*. Here's to a summer filled with standout venues, unforgettable events, and meaningful connections.

We hope this edition leaves you inspired and ready for whatever your summer calendar holds, including Last Call!

Breaking The Mold: Why Planners Are Choosing Luxury & Boutique Over the Expected



It's no secret: the event landscape is changing. The cookie-cutter ballroom is no longer the gold standard. In its place, planners are leaning into spaces that feel authentic, elevated, and unforgettable. Welcome to the resurgence of luxury and boutique venues; a movement defined by individuality, story, and immersive experiences.

Going From Functional to Experiential

Today's attendees want more than a space; they want a sense of place. They want to walk into a venue and feel something. Whether it's inspired architecture, curated design, or locally rooted hospitality, boutique and luxury venues offer a depth of experience that standard venues simply can't replicate.

And it's not just about aesthetics. These venues allow us to connect the environment with the event's purpose.

But Why Are Planners Making the Shift

- **Experience > Capacity:** Rather than packing guests into large, generic halls, planners are choosing intimate venues with bold character. Think rooftops, art galleries, design-forward hotels, and historic buildings with a story to tell.
- **Tailored Touches:** Boutique venues tend to offer more customization. From locally inspired menus to flexible room layouts and personalized service, these spaces support a planner's vision without compromise.
- **Stronger Impressions:** Unique settings naturally elevate brand perception. They convey intention, care, and distinction; factors that create long-lasting impressions and emotional resonance for attendees.
- **High-Touch Service:** Many luxury and boutique venues excel at thoughtful hospitality. Their smaller size often means more attention to detail, faster responses, and a seamless guest experience from start to finish.

Of Course, It's Not Without Trade-Offs

Planning in a boutique or luxury space may involve more up-front coordination, capacity considerations, or slightly higher costs. But for many planners, the payoff = uniqueness, memorability, and engagement, and this is well worth the effort.

Venues to Watch: Boutique & Luxury Standouts

If you're considering stepping away from the traditional, here are three exceptional properties that embody this shift:

[Le Germain Hotel Toronto Mercer](#) – Toronto, ON

[Shangri-La Hotel](#) – Toronto, ON

[Hotel Nelligan](#) – Montréal, QC

As events continue to evolve, so does the definition of a perfect venue. The luxury and boutique resurgence isn't just a passing trend; it's a reflection of a deeper shift toward creating meaningful, tailored experiences. For planners ready to think beyond the ballroom, this is your moment.

Hotel Spotlight: Curated Spaces, Lasting Impressions.



Hotel Nelligan | Le Germain Hotel Toronto Mercer | Shangri-La Hotel Toronto

From Boutique Charm to Luxury Grandeur

In our last feature, we explored why today's event planners are saying goodbye to generic ballrooms and leaning into venues with personality, intimacy, and style. The shift toward luxury and boutique properties isn't just aesthetic; in fact, it's strategic. These venues offer the kind of curated, immersive environments that transform gatherings into unforgettable experiences.

Now we want to highlight three standout hotels that embody this new standard. Whether it's a rooftop reception in historic Old Montréal or a high-profile launch in the heart of Toronto, these properties prove that character, service, and thoughtful design are key to creating events that resonate.

Montréal, QC

Hotel Spotlight: [*Hotel Nelligan*](#)

With its exposed brick walls and warm boutique ambiance, Hotel Nelligan feels less like a venue and more like a storybook setting. Located in the heart of Old Montréal, this hotel is ideal for intimate groups seeking charm, exclusivity, and a strong sense of place.

Why We Love It:

- The property has 105 guest rooms, making it just the right size for full buyouts or cozy, all-in-one gatherings.
- Coming with a total of 5 meeting/event spaces, including a stunning rooftop terrace and an atmospheric wine cellar, with capacity up to 100 guests.
- It is ideal for events such as leadership retreats, creative planning sessions, and boutique incentive programs.

Standout Features:

- The blend of exposed brick, warm textures, and European-inspired architecture creates a uniquely romantic backdrop

- Fireplaces and stone accents offer a cozy, heritage atmosphere
- Rooftop terrace for open-air receptions with historic views

Group Activities in Montréal:

- Explore Old Montréal on a guided historical tour
- Wine and cheese pairing workshop in a local cellar
- Interactive art or photography experience in the Old Port

Toronto, ON

Hotel Spotlight: [*Le Germain Hotel Toronto Mercer*](#)

Tucked into the heart of Toronto's Entertainment District, Le Germain Hotel Toronto Mercer is where modern luxury meets understated elegance. With a strong focus on personalized service and design, this hotel is tailor-made for groups that value intimacy without sacrificing sophistication.

Why We Love It:

- With 104 guest rooms, this hotel embraces sleek, design-forward accommodations with a residential feel.
- While they only have 2 meeting/event spaces, the spaces are elegant, naturally lit rooms that can host up to 150 guests.
- We highly recommend this space for events such as client appreciation events, small conferences, creative offsites

Standout Features:

- Bright, natural-light-filled meeting spaces
- Thoughtful touches like in-room yoga mats and curated minibars
- Sleek design that blends residential comfort with executive polish

Group Activities in Toronto:

- Cocktail-making masterclass at a trendy local bar
- Group night out at TIFF Bell Lightbox or the Royal Alexandra Theatre
- Guided graffiti alley tour and street art workshop

Toronto, ON

Hotel Spotlight: [*Shangri-La Hotel Toronto*](#)

A beacon of refined luxury in downtown Toronto, the Shangri-La is where statement-making events come to life. It blends Asian-inspired sophistication with five-star service, making it the venue of choice for high-profile gatherings.

Why We Love It:

- This property does not fall short with a total of 202 guest rooms. It is spacious, luxurious, and designed for VIP-level comfort.
- They have 8 lovely event spaces to give you a range of variety. Including a dramatic grand ballroom and breakout rooms, accommodating up to 400 guests.
- The Shangri-La is perfect for luxury galas, investor or client meetings, brand activations, and international summits.

Standout Features:

- Grand ballroom framed by dramatic skyline views
- Michelin-starred dining at the
- Hotel art collection featuring international and Canadian artists

Group Activities in Toronto:

- Private wellness or sound bath session at Miraj Hammam Spa
- Progressive dinner through Toronto's Michelin-starred restaurants
- Private after-hours access to the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)

From boutique elegance to grand-scale luxury, these properties reflect the evolving priorities of event planners and attendees alike. They're not just places to meet, they're environments designed to mean something. In this new era of experiential events, that makes all the difference.

✉ *Ready to explore one of these destinations for your next event? Get in touch with us at info@strategicsiteselection.com. We'll help you bring your vision to life, wherever you want to go.*



CANADIAN
MEETINGS +
EVENTS EXPO

CMEE - April 12-13

Canadian Meeting + Events Expo (CMEExpo) is the largest, best attended and longest running meetings and events show in Canada. What began in 1991 as the Canadian Incentive Travel Symposium has grown to offer an incredible two days of valuable connections and education representing 200+ companies every year in downtown Toronto.



IMEX America - Oct 7-9

Where the global meetings and events industry converges in a standout Las Vegas setting, to meet, learn and do business at our industry's leading and largest trade show, for North America's largest meetings industry trade show.



SUPPER SERIES HIGHLIGHTS



Dinner, Dialogue & Design: A [Shangri-La](#) Supper to Remember

This month, we held the third unforgettable installment of our SSS Supper Series, this time hosted in the sophisticated elegance of [Shangri-La Toronto](#).

Our Supper Series exists to shift the focus away from conference tables, bringing clients together around an intimate dinner setting where conversations and ideas flow freely, allowing relationships to build and deepen. This latest gathering did not disappoint!

Shangri-La Toronto provided the perfect backdrop. This hotel does not fall short when it comes to meeting space. Its third floor offers over **15,000 sq ft of event space**, including two expansive ballrooms: one adjoins a lush garden terrace, and the other is a stunning two-story glass box overlooking University Avenue, adorned with 13 Italian crystal chandeliers. For smaller groups, the 42-seat screening room offers a private, cinematic environment. With such a diverse mix of spaces, ranging from dramatic to discreet, how could we not curate a Supper Series at this location that truly elevated connection and conversation?

From the moment guests arrived, warm hospitality and luxurious surroundings set the tone. A gorgeous menu, ambient lighting, and carefully curated décor made every element resonate with purpose and charm. Our thanks go to the Shangri-La Toronto event team, whose flawless execution elevated the evening from simply enjoyable to truly unforgettable.

Most of all, we are grateful to the clients who joined us, contributing their energy to an evening rich in thoughtful dialogue and collaboration. This was not just a dinner—it was a cornerstone moment, reminding us why these personal connections matter in the world of events.

Here's to more Supper Series moments that do what they're meant to: spark innovation, deep bonding, and leave a lasting impression. We can't wait for what's next.

If you are interested in joining us at the next one in our series, please reach out to us at info@strategicsiteselection.com!



Ctrl Alt Meet:
REBOOT. REFRESH. RECONNECT.

Join us for a virtual education event.

Connect with fellow tech event professionals for an open virtual forum where we'll dive into the real challenges shaping our industry today. This is your space to connect with like-minded peers, share insights, and explore what's working—and what's not—in the world of tech events. Let's talk pain points, possibilities, and practical solutions.

**Wednesday, June 25, 2025
2:00pm (EST)**

Your questions will be answered live.
Register now to attend and to include your questions.

presented by:

 **STRATEGIC SITE SELECTION**

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[Click here to register](#)

Ctrl Alt Meet: Reboot, Refresh, Reconnect

We're thrilled to announce the return of our signature virtual event series—**Activate Your Network**—with a brand-new edition: "Ctrl Alt Meet," designed to energize, inspire, and connect.

Join us on Tuesday, June 25th from 2:00–3:00 PM EST for "Ctrl Alt Meet: Reboot, Refresh, Reconnect," a dynamic virtual forum created specifically for professionals in the tech sector and beyond.

This isn't your typical webinar. Activate Your Network is built around one goal: to spark meaningful conversations and fresh thinking among leaders and planners in the tech sector. Whether you're reimagining attendee engagement, exploring the future of hybrid experiences, or simply hoping to reconnect with peers who "get it," this

hour is for you.

You'll walk away with:

- Valuable industry insights
- New perspectives and strategies
- A stronger professional network

So, if you're ready to reboot the conversation, let's do it together.

To RSVP, send us an email info@strategicsiteselection.com or contact your SSS team member today!

We can't wait to connect with you!



We're Growing — Come Join Us at Strategic Site Selection!

Are you ready for your next big move in the meetings and events industry? We're thrilled to share that we have three exciting roles open for driven, relationship-focused professionals who are passionate about the meetings and events industry. If you're ready to grow your career, contribute to a dynamic team, and make a meaningful impact, we want to connect with you!

We're currently looking for:

Director, Global Accounts – [Apply here](#)

Director, Business Development – [Apply here](#)

Coordinator, Human Resources – [Apply Here](#)

Coordinator, Client Experience – [Apply Here](#)

At Strategic Site Selection, we're in the business of creating connections and unforgettable experiences. If you thrive in a collaborative, forward-thinking environment, this could be the perfect next step for you.

Know someone who'd be a great fit? Don't keep it to yourself—pass it along!



Celebrate 20 Years of Impact at Last Call 2025!➔

We can't believe how quickly time is passing as we get ready to host one of our most meaningful events yet, Last Call 2025!

As we mark our **20th anniversary**, we're going all in to honour the journey that brought us here, highlighting the power of travel, connection, and partnerships that go the distance. That's why our theme for this year's event is **Destination: Legacy**: a nod to the stories, destinations, and relationships that have shaped our past and are paving the way for our future.

Venue: *The Quay*, Toronto

There's no better setting to bring that to life than **The Quay**, Toronto's newest venue gem. Located at **100 Queen Street West**, The Quay offers sleek architectural details, skyline views, and versatile layouts. The perfect canvas to celebrate how far we've come and where we're going next.

Date: August 11, 2025

What to Expect:

- Meaningful moments and curated experiences
- Inspiring conversations and networking
- A celebration of legacy, loyalty, and looking forward
- Exceptional hospitality in a one-of-a-kind venue

This year's Last Call won't just be an event; it will be a moment to reflect, recharge, and reconnect with the people who've been part of our story. People who are not only our colleagues, clients, and partners but also good friends.

Legacy isn't just about looking back, it's about setting the stage for what comes next.

We can't wait to raise a glass with you at *The Quay* this August.

Want to Be a Part of It?

Registration for our celebration will be opening soon, and places are limited!

For more information reach out to your SSS team member or:

Mark Dosman – markd@strategicsiteselection.com

Kristi Piukkala – kristip@sandbox-events.com

Let's make this year's *Last Call* one for the books.

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