Go for the GOLF

Springfield, Illinois

Global Spectrum Becomes Spectra

Faith-Based Meeting Guide
Global Spectrum Rebrands as Spectra

By Dan Dickson

Spectra’s Atlantic City Convention Center hosts the annual Atlantic City Power Boat Show.

Comcast Spectator, the Philadelphia-based sports and entertainment giant, has blended three of its divisions – Global Spectrum, Ovations Food Services and Paciolan – into a single efficient brand called Spectra. Comcast Spectator operates three principal businesses: the Philadelphia Flyers hockey team, the 19,500-seat multipurpose Wells Fargo Center and the newly minted Spectra.

Spectra consists of three newly named sectors all acting as one: Venue Management, formerly Global Spectrum; Food Services and Hospitality, formerly Ovations Food Services; and Ticketing and Fan Engagement, formerly Paciolan.

“Eighteen months ago, when Dave Scott became chief operating officer and president of Comcast Spectator, one of Dave’s first initiatives was to look at everything we do and think how we could do business better as one,” said Phil Weinberg, executive vice president and general counsel for Comcast Spectator.

Weinberg said the company wanted to think more collectively about the enterprise rather than viewing it as several independent “cyber” companies owned commonly. “This is a more integrated, go-to-market approach,” he said.

As part of the evolution, executives wanted the company’s services based around a single brand offering venue management, food hospitality and ticketing.

A Philadelphia branding company was hired to smooth the transition, to take the unit “from a house of brands to a branded house in a simpler, more streamlined way of presenting ourselves to the market,” said Weinberg.

The old companies – Ovations and Paciolan – both came into the fold through acquisition, not “by forming them out of the box,” said Weinberg. “They had their own history and identities. Comcast Spectator felt they should be together. It’s good to take stock and reevaluate what’s in your corporate family.”

Global Spectrum felt it had already offered all the right services to customers, but it was a bit harder to tell the story because of the different names. “This really helps us integrate and go to market in a clean, easy-to-understand fashion for our customers.”

Weinberg commented further on the new divisions under Spectra. Spectra Venue Management, the old Global Spectrum business, will provide management services to arenas and convention centers.
“What’s changed here is the brand, not the scope of service or our capability,” said Weinberg.

As for Spectra Food Services and Hospitality, formerly Ovations, “nothing has really changed,” said Weinberg. “We consider ourselves experts who help clients host their events in the best way possible with a full range of services.” Spectra Ticketing and Fan Engagement, formerly Paciolan, continues its work as the second-largest ticketing agency in the country after Ticketmaster.

Spectra spent a great deal of time and resources combining sales forces and outreach functions. It will continue its work in both large and small markets across North America, still at root a local company.

“We’ve always prided ourselves on being locally driven in our communities and focused on each project,” said Weinberg. “The same people who booked events at any facility before will continue to do so now.”
One of the new divisions of Spectra, Spectra Venue Management, will be especially important to meeting planners of all kinds, especially those in smaller markets.

"When you look at our clientele and who we touch from a facility and food and hospitality perspective, most are located in secondary and tertiary markets," said John Page, president of Spectra Venue Management. "In all our venues, we have a general manager whose sole focus is to manage their locale. We emphasize with our managers that they're part of the community. They must be engaged to know what makes that community tick."

Spectra's goal is to maximize opportunities for small market meeting planners by taking advantage of the company's knowledge and systems. "That's all the best practices, communication and finer details necessary to maximize the experience," said Page. "It doesn't become 'Hey, this is how we do it in Philadelphia, so this is how we'll do it everywhere.' No, there's a lot of flexibility."

Conventions and visitors benefit from the new Spectra brand in how they promote their cities. Spectra aligns itself with them.

"Sometimes we support and supplement the long-range goals and sales plans of CVBs," said Page. "We'll use our best practices from other markets to assist them. There may be meetings or conventions they don't know about. We'll use our connections through our national sales program to position that market as a viable place for meetings."

**Food Services and Hospitality**

Spectra serves food and beverages at sports and convention venues, cultural attractions, fairs, entertainment centers, and gaming and hotel sites. That's 250,000 events and 50 million customers a year across North America. "That's a lot of guests," said Ken Young, president of Spectra Food Services and Hospitality. "We'll use our best practices from other markets to assist them. There may be meetings or conventions they don't know about. We'll use our connections through our national sales program to position that market as a viable place for meetings."

"In the end, you're serving individuals and, hopefully, giving them excellent service," he said. No matter the venue, Spectra will continue its food service philosophy developed nine years ago: "Everything is fresh."

"More can be done to feed people. For example, trade show planners can order food in advance and skip concession stands. Almost any type of catering can be done for meetings, as simple or as sophisticated as needed. Spectra convention centers can handle any food concept."

Spectra also provides many cooking stations that prepare food right in front of people, not just one long line of guests picking up items. "We can have 5,000 and still be able to do it that way," said Young. "You have two or three entrees, pasta and different vegetable choices all prepared as you watch. It's hot, pleasing to the eye and prepared five minutes before you'll eat it."

Young says Spectra will always be evolving. With its employees sharing the same goals, he feels it will lead to more business for the company and an enhanced reputation.
With a variety of managed Convention Centers, Spectra works with event planners to turn events into experiences with proven methods, innovative concepts, responsive customer service, and passionate industry professionals.

SpectraExperiences.com

Enid Event Center & Convention Hall  
ENID, OK

Event Center: 33,000 sq. ft. exhibit space, 3,200 seats for sporting events, 3,800 seats for concerts
Convention Hall: 10,000 sq. ft. ballroom, 4,000 sq. ft. junior ballroom, 7,000 sq. ft. meeting rooms
Parking: 1,400 free spaces
Location: Historic downtown, walk-able restaurants and shops
Hotel Rooms: 880 rooms within 5 minutes

"The room was set up beautifully, and the Enid Event Center and Convention Hall staff was there at every turn to make sure our needs were met. We couldn't have done it without you, and I sincerely thank you for all of the hard work, and for calming us down when things got hectic! You have an amazing ability to see the big picture, and put things in perspective. I can't say enough, how wonderful you and your staff were to the WCA."

Nancy Humphrey,  
WCA Executive Director

enideventcenter.com

Greater Richmond Convention Center  
RICHMOND, VA

Exhibit Hall: 178,000 sq. ft.
Ballroom: 30,550 sq. ft.
Breakouts: 36
Total Meeting Space: 80,000 sq. ft.
Hotel Rooms: More than 18,000 in Richmond Region
Largest meeting and exhibition facility in Virginia

"Words cannot express how grateful we are to you and your staff for the time and support you gave to our convention. From the very beginning of our five year relationship, we felt this event was just as important to you as it was to us. You have such a wonderful staff representing the Greater Richmond Convention Center."

National Holstein Convention

richmondcenter.com
Pueblo Convention Center  PUEBLO, CO

Ballroom: 16,500 sq. ft.
Breakouts: 7
Total Meeting Space: 29,000 sq. ft.
Attached Hotel: 163 rooms
Location: Historic Arkansas Riverwalk
Walking distance to historic downtown
Pueblo, dining, shopping, and entertainment

“All I can say is wow, what a wonderful break you gave us and such hospitality. It truly made our day! Thank you for making the 8th Battalion-4th Field Artillery Unit’s Pueblo visit a memory we will never forget!”

Honorary Member, 8th Battalion-4th Field Artillery

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Cross Insurance Center  BANGOR, ME

Exhibit Hall: 26,000 sq. ft.
Total Meeting Space: 26,153 sq. ft.
Breakouts: 18
Airport: Minutes from Bangor International Airport
New State-of-the-Art Facility with diverse dining, nightlife and shopping. One hour from Acadia National Park.

Offering you first class hospitality and providing an unparalleled experience, the Cross Insurance Center is an 8,000 capacity arena that converts into a column-free exhibit hall with attached convention space including a grand ballroom and 11 meeting rooms totaling to 52,840 sq. ft. of meeting space.

crossinsurancecenter.com
Iowa Events Center
DES MOINES, IA

Exhibit Hall: 150,000 sq. ft.
Ballroom: 28,800 sq. ft.
Breakouts: 10
Total Meeting Space: 226,000 sq. ft.
Pre-function space: 60,300 sq. ft.
Arena: 16,980 seats
New space opened January 2012

“"I just wanted to send over a quick note to express my sincere appreciation towards the wonderful staff at the Iowa Events Center. H2 Entertainment Group, LLC is nearing our third year of holding events at Hy-Vee Hall and I cannot tell you how helpful your venue(s) and employees have been in boosting our show, Midwest Cage Championship, to a level that our customers continue to rave about, event after event.”

Ryan M. Hass, H2 Entertainment Group, LLC.

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Utah Valley Convention Center
PROVO, UT

Exhibit Hall: 20,000 sq. ft.
Ballroom: 17,000 sq. ft.
Rooftop Terrace: 5,500 sq. ft.
Total Meeting Space: 46,000 sq. ft.
Breakouts: 10
Adjacent Hotel Rooms: 330,
1,300 rooms with shuttle service
Mountain Views & Free Wi-Fi

“Our event experience was positive and everyone had a great time. We will definitely use you in the future! Often times at convention centers the food is just ok, but everyone was commenting on how great the food was! Please pass along the positive comments to your Chef! Everyone loved the food.”

Melanie Brower, doTERRA

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Durham Convention Center  DURHAM, NC

Grand Ballroom: 14,000 sq. ft.
Jr. Ballroom: 11,000 sq. ft.
(devisable into 8 sections)
Board Rooms: 2  |  Meeting Rooms: 4
Newly Renovated
New Kitchen & Culinary Program

“The staff and facility exceeded our expectations in a challenging year. Kudos all around – you made us (and Durham) look good.”
Ted Mott, Full Frame Documentary Film Festival

durhamconventioncenter.com

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MassMutual Center Convention Center & Arena  SPRINGFIELD, MA

Exhibit Hall: 40,000 sq. ft.
Ballroom: 15,000 sq. ft.
Breakouts: 8
Total Meeting Space: 24,500 sq. ft.
Arena Seats: 8,000
Hotel Rooms: 900 walk-able

“We are extremely grateful for the relationship we’ve built with the MassMutual Center. They are attentive, detail oriented, and have been very generous to our organization and the people we serve.”
Page Brody, Muscular Dystrophy Association

massmutualcenter.com
ST. CHARLES, MO

Exhibit Hall: 35,700 sq. ft.
Ballroom: 16,200 sq. ft.
Breakouts: 17
Total Meeting Space: 25,000 sq. ft.
Attached Hotel: 296 rooms
Parking: 1,200 complimentary

“Our 1249 attendees agree that the St. Charles Convention Center (SCCC) was a fabulous place to meet and we received tremendous accolades. This proves that when committed and experienced staff join forces, and are supported by their executives, a meeting planner can accomplish great things for their group. The convenient way your facility is laid out and the seamless connection with Embassy Suites was the reason we chose SCCC. However, your service and your people are the reasons we’d return again and again.”

Gwen Knight, CMP Meeting Planner – Pioneer Network

stcharlesconventioncenter.com

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LEARN ABOUT THESE SERVICES PLUS MORE AT SPECTRAEXPERIENCES.COM
Spectra is an expert in hosting and entertainment management for hundreds of properties in cities large and small throughout the world. Its experience in venue management, food services and hospitality, and ticketing and fan engagement are legendary. The recent blending of Global Spectrum, Ovations and Paciolan into Spectra creates integration and innovation that benefits clients.

“When you come to a convention center to do business, you talk to salespeople about renting the space, AV people about audio and visual needs, food service managers about meals,” said Karen Toturo, general manager at the Atlantic City Convention Center, managed by Spectra. “Many places don’t have one person to go to. But our change to Spectra makes it simple for clients – just one contact.”

Toturo added that with efficiency comes cost savings for customers. “That means more dollars available for them to spend on something else,” she said.

Toturo gave an example from her property of how the meshing of resources paid off. The Atlantic City Convention Center and its food partner have held separate job fairs to hire hundreds of full- and part-time staff. “Now we do it as one group using the same HR manager and saving so much time and cost,” she said. It’s the same with customer service training. Now, all areas of the new Spectra hear one clear message about how to treat customers.

With Spectra’s vast resources, information sharing pays dividends.

“If I have a good show here in Atlantic City, I’ll share that with all other convention centers under Spectra,” Toturo said. “Maybe the show producers want to go out to the West Coast. We’ll connect them to our people out there.”

In Des Moines, Iowa, all three Spectra divisions have already been successfully engaged for many months, according to Chris Connolly, general manager of the Iowa Events Center. His site has three components: Wells Fargo Arena, which seats 17,000 people; Hy-Vee Hall, with two 50,000-square-foot halls; and Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center. After renovations to all properties, business took off.

“I can say with some pride that we’ve operated like one team for quite some time and not like separate divisions,” said Connolly. “We did many of these things even before corporate decided to rebrand into Spectra.”

An example of Iowa’s success is wedding receptions. Before an old arena was converted into a convention center with a new a ballroom, the center hosted seven or eight receptions per year. Now, the count is nearly 40.

“That’s huge business for us,” said Connolly. “That’s where the one-brand concept really pays off with venue management and food-and-beverage service working together.” Connolly said when clients stage an event at his facilities, they’ll have one company sending them invoices.

The remix is also about identification.

“When you do business with Iowa Events Center or any company-managed facility, you’re hiring Spectra, not Global Spectrum, Ovations or Paciolan,” said Connolly. “It’s great for clients and our internal staff. One brand working together. The official rebranding is fantastic.”
Speed and nimbleness are essential skills for a convention center operator when a potential client is considering booking that property for an event. The rebranded Spectra division of Comcast Spectacor can confidently meet those demands.

“We have a broad set of contacts within our company to quickly and easily respond to meeting planners’ requests by combining our hospitality and food services with the venue management side of our company,” said Shura Garnett, regional vice president for Spectra Venue Management. She is also general manager of the St. Charles, Missouri, Convention Center.

If a customer is searching for creative ideas on food-and-beverage presentations, Spectra can tap into a network of 500 to 400 industry contacts that offer suggestions that are bound to impress the client. “It takes experience to host an unforgettable event, and with all of our convention centers throughout North America, we feel we’re experts at bringing out the best in those that work with us,” said Garnett. The Spectra focus is on innovation, collaboration and engagement.

There are several trends emerging in the convention trade, said Garnett. Meeting planners are making their wants known. More of
them are asking for complimentary meeting space. If a planner expects to spend a certain amount of money on food and beverage, audiovisual and other services, they often want the cost of the meeting space to be zero. Planners also want more unusual and creative settings. Some want greener meetings or more economical ones.

The needs for information technology are growing, too. Complimentary Wi-Fi is big. Many ask for it, said Garnett. "One day in the future, it is going to be an expecta-
tion to provide it, just like it’s an expectation to provide electricity and lights," she said. Wi-Fi is gaining importance because meeting organizers do more live streaming. "But that can take a toll on your Wi-Fi system if it’s not state of the art. Sometimes hot spots can interfere with a building’s Wi-Fi system."

As for technology, Spectra’s ties to its parent company, Comcast Spectacor, and its vast network means “we bring the latest and greatest technology and innovation to those venues,” said Garnett.

Spectra is always searching for new business and has implemented a national marketing plan. All of its convention centers share in it, said Garnett. The plan includes trade show participation, advertising, promoting venues and communication that includes e-newsletters, direct mail and email marketing to meeting planners. Perhaps most important, there is a shared database of planner information. Spectra staff members don’t just work off separate contact lists; they share them companywide – 20,000 or more of them. Data can be mined for best practices that assist clients.

Sharing clients within Spectra is another successful strategy, Garnett said that an event just held in St. Charles could possibly rotate to another city and venue in the future. “We try to put the event planners in touch with other venues we think will be appropriate for that planner,” she said.