



VENUESNOW CONFERENCE 2025 CONCLUDES IN LAS VEGAS FEATURING INDUSTRY-DEFINING CONVERSATIONS

The Conference's Debut in the Entertainment Capital of the World Solidifies Its Position as the Premier Forum for Venue Professionals

LOS ANGELES, CA (September 11, 2025) – The 2025 [VenuesNow Conference](#) (VNC) has concluded at Resorts World Las Vegas, as the three-day conference, presented by Lockton and Oracle, brought together the most influential leaders and visionaries from the live entertainment, sports, and cultural venue industries for dynamic conversations that will shape the future of live experiences.

"This year's VenuesNow Conference underscored the power of coming together as an industry," said **Ray Waddell**, Chief Content Director of OVG Media & Conferences. "As the entertainment capital of the world, Las Vegas was the perfect backdrop to unite the industry, inspire new ideas, and set a higher standard for what live entertainment can accomplish. We're already looking forward to building on this momentum at the VenuesNow and Pollstar Live! conferences in 2026 where we'll continue driving bold ideas and celebrating the progress shaping our industry's future."

The conference commenced with a new half-day dedicated to programming focused on sustainability. The "Platform for Sustainability" session featured musician and climate advocate **Adam Met**, PhD, educator, advocate, and musician of the multi-platinum band AJR, in conversation with OVG's Interim CEO **Chris Granger**. This forward-looking discussion on the intersection of sustainability, entertainment, and influence explored how venues, brands, and cultural icons can leverage their platforms to inspire meaningful climate action and create scalable impact (read more [here](#)).

Other key sessions included "Impact Leadership in Vegas" with **Eric Tosi** of the Vegas Golden Knights, **Rich Sloan** of WAVR Technologies, **Jamie Schwartz** of UNLV Research and Technology Park, **Lauren Boitel** of ImpactNV, and Formula 1 Las Vegas Grand Prix' **Jeremy Walters** (read more [here](#)). The day's additional panels featured "The Business Strategy Behind Impact," with OVG's **Shannon Trujillo**, **Rishi Jain** of Liverpool Football Club, **Maria Sapienza** of the Chicago Cubs, and **Michael Sciortino** of UBS Arena. Attendees also engaged in discussions on environmental stewardship, with "Hot Button" sessions on waste solutions sponsored by Busch Systems and featuring **Kristen Fulmer**, **Joe Giarraputo**, **Ciera Culcasi**, **Jeffrey Lerma**, **Michael Martin**, **Zach Ruiz**, and **Bryan Wojcik**, as well as energy solutions with **Michael DeCaluwe**, **Ashley Gladney**, **Nicholas Gordon**, **Kelly McGrath**, **Kristen Fulmer**, and **Jamy Bacchus**, plus more. The day concluded with a reception sponsored by Mortenson featuring the [2025 All Star Honorees](#) sponsored by Daktronics and Populous.

The second day's programming highlights included "Venues Of Vegas: An Update on the Las Vegas Athletics" moderated by **John Saccenti** of ESPN Events, featuring President of the Athletics, **Marc Badain**, the A's VP, Marketing & Communications, **Catherine Aker**, **Todd Bishop** of CAA ICON, and **Logan Gerken** of Mortenson, with the day beginning with a powerful discussion on "The Shifting Economics of University Sports & Entertainment," sponsored by Ticketmaster, led by OVG's **Dan Griffis**, with Clemson Athletic Ventures' **Michael Drake**, Arizona State University Athletic Director **Graham Rossini**, University of Oklahoma's **Marcus Bowman**, University of Iowa's **Joe Parker**, and **Byron Chambers** of Populous.

Day Two took a deep dive into the business of venues with a variety of panels and discussions. "Booking: Arenas & Stadiums" moderated by Moody Center / OVG's **Michael Owens**, saw insights from **Antony Bonavita** of Rock Entertainment Group, **Becky Colwell** of Halo Sports & Entertainment, **Jen Sandstrom** of SoFi Stadium, and ASM Global / Legends' **Elyse Scally**. "Booking: Theaters & Small Venues" sponsored by Seminole Hard Rock and moderated by Pollstar's **Andy Gensler** featured **Noël Largess Mirhadi**, **Brittany Johnston**, **Jeffrey Jordan**, **Molly Warren**, and **Stephen Chilton**. The discussion on "Culture Is Currency: Unlocking Revenue Through Representation" was sponsored by Oracle and featured contributions from **Gary Guidry**, OVG's **Dr. Debonair Oates-Primus**, **Emily Rudin**, and **Starr Jemison**. Additional sessions covered topics from stadium operations to global booking, with experts including **Gary Hutchinson**, **Iain Campbell**, **Fernanda Martínez**, **Patrik Meyer**, and **Laura Chiplin** discussing a "Global Booking Update," Town Halls, and more. The day's programming concluded with the VNC Reception, sponsored by Populous, which included a special tour of Allegiant Stadium sponsored by AECOM Hunt.

The final day of the conference began with a special Q&A with Las Vegas Raiders President **Sandra Douglass Morgan** moderated by Chris Granger, who offered unparalleled insights into the intersection of sports, entertainment, and community impact.

Attendees received a spotlight on the "INTERNATIONAL: Spotlight on Latin America" panel sponsored by Samsung with moderator **Wesley Elizabeth Cullen**, and featuring **Juan Pablo García Castro**, **Sabrina Galante**, **Claudio Macedo**, and **Luz Ángela Castro**. A panel on "Security Impact on Budget" sponsored by Allied featured **Akmal Ali**, **Mike Downing**, **D'Juana Thomas**, **Dr. Mark Hamilton**, **Darrin Kimes**, **Helen Sandford**, and **Scott Anderson**. Other high-level speakers sharing their expertise included **Ken Gaber**, **Dan Berkowitz**, **Ashley Goodhue-White**, **Qiava Martinez**, and **Mike Kress** who spoke on "Beyond the Bowl: Creating Premium Experiences Around the Venue" sponsored by Xerox. Plus, a fun "Stirred, Shaken & Zero-Proof: The Art (and Business) of the Perfect Pour" panel, featuring **Jacqueline Einfeldt**, **Marisa Flynn**, **Stephanie LoSasso**, and **Justin Razza**, brought award-winning mixologists and venue F&B leaders on stage to craft signature cocktails and zero-proof creations live. For more details and recaps on the conference panels, visit the VNC editorial hub at [Pollstar.com](https://www.pollstar.com).

The 2025 VenuesNow Conference not only brought together top arena and facility professionals for world-class programming and networking but also spotlighted excellence across the industry. This year's event featured the prestigious **GOAL Awards** and OVG's **Arena Alliance Awards**, underscoring the innovation, sustainability, and partnership driving the live entertainment industry forward. The ceremony took place Sept. 9 at Jalisco Underground at Resorts World following the opening reception for the conference. Bridgestone Arena's **David Kells** and Prudential Center's **Tyler Bates** were among the executives honored. Kells, who serves as Chief Venues Officer for Bridgestone Arena and the Nashville Predators, was named the Venue Operator of the Year. Bates, who is the Vice President of Booking at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey, is the Venue Booker of the Year. The other winners include **Robby Yam**,

Sr. Event Manager of Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle, as the Event Manager of the Year, and **Carrie Samek**, Vice President of Events and Media Marketing of Rocket Arena in Cleveland, as the Marketing Professional of the Year. The Kia Forum in Inglewood, California, was awarded Best Venue Hospitality. For a full list of winners, [read more here](#).

At the conclusion of the conference, **Pollstar Live!**, the world's premier gathering of live entertainment professionals, announced it will return **April 14–16, 2026**, with three full days of game-changing programming attendees can't afford to miss. From talent booking to ticketing, sponsorships to sustainability, marketing to fan engagement — this is where the industry comes together to shape what's next in live entertainment. New in 2026, Pollstar Live! expands to a third full day, answering the demand for deeper content with more sessions, more conversations, and more opportunities to learn, connect, and grow — running alongside the powerhouse Production Live! Due to ongoing construction at the conference's longtime home, The Beverly Hilton, the 2026 edition will move to a new venue in the greater Los Angeles area (to be announced soon). Get ready for visionary speakers, standout panels, and unparalleled networking — delivering the same can't-miss experience that makes Pollstar Live! the world's premier live entertainment event. Early bird registration is open now through October 13, for more information, [click here](#).

To view photos and b-roll of featured panels, visit the VNC media site: <https://vnc25.pollstar.com/> (password: PRESSACCESS25).

About VenuesNow Conference:

VenuesNow Conference is the preeminent forum for live events, sports and cultural venue owners and partners to discuss the current dynamics, share best practices, innovative initiatives and trends and the future vision of the industry. The conference offers three days of programming featuring topics ranging from content and bookings, hospitality, premium experiences, venue optimization, new trends in security, data, technology, and the diverse realities facing venues today. New in 2025, VenuesNow featured a half-day of curated content highlighting best practices in sustainability across all venue types, including how to manage energy, water, and waste effectively and the critical levers to ensure financial sustainability, corporate partnerships and guest experience.

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