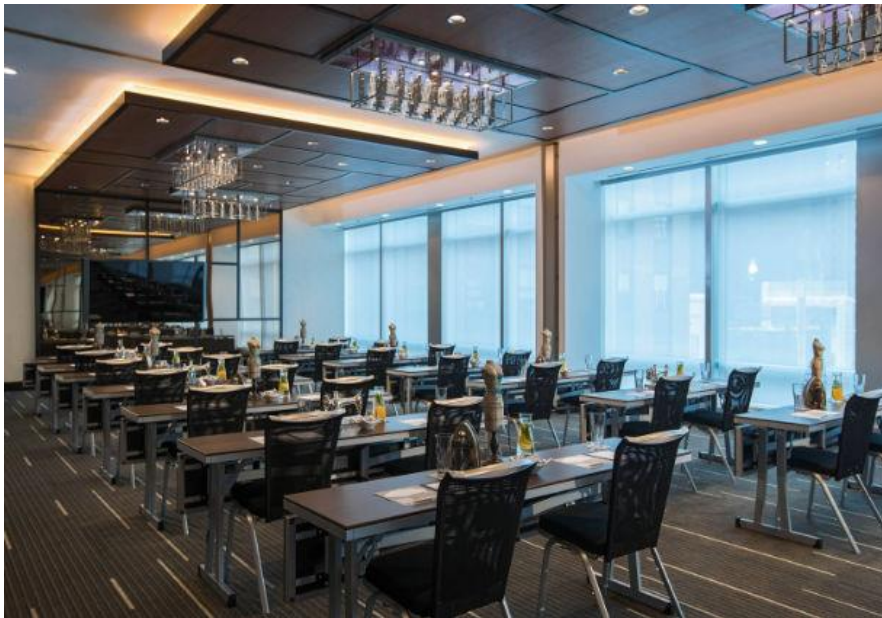


## Design

# How small and large hotels are designing event spaces

by [Jena Tesse Fox](#) |  
Mar 20, 2017 4:56pm



*The New York Renaissance Midtown Hotel uses movable glass walls to create private event spaces.*

Depending on its focus, a hotel can have anything from a small meeting room to a full convention center, with nearly limitless options for design. ←

## Small Scale in the Big City

The Renaissance New York Midtown Hotel opened last year by New York City's Penn Station. With a limited urban footprint, designer Jeffrey Beers found ways to make the public spaces private as needed for meetings and events. Folding glass doors close off the main meeting room, but allow light to flow through, offering privacy while avoiding claustrophobia. ←

“We developed an area of the meeting-room level that is an open-lounge concept,” Beers said. “It is set up with comfortable flexible lounge furniture so that people can meet informally or use it as a break-out space from the main meeting rooms. The event space is set up to be either completely open or could be divided up into multiple rooms. We also placed it on an upper floor so that it has plenty of sunlight and views.” ←

Joseph Cervasio, director of event operations for the Dream Downtown in New York City and his team also sought to avoid a closed-off feeling in the hotel's Gallery event space, using light and colors to create a sense of space. "The uplighting around the room is able to bounce off of the lightly colored ceiling, panels and brick to give a room wash of any color and really bring the room to life," he said. "The room was designed with full 360-degree uplights that wash every wall and change to any color to fully customize the space as desired." Projectors are suspended from the ceiling and connected to wall plates to make multimedia presentations easy, he added.

## Making Bigger Better

In late 2015, Harrah's Atlantic City opened the Waterfront Conference Center, which has more than 100,000 square feet of conference space. The \$125-million venue is now the largest events facility between Baltimore and Boston, with two 50,000 square-foot ballrooms that can be configured in up to 200 different ways, making more than 60 smaller rooms.



"It can be difficult for organizers to plan a meeting or convention a few years out, or even a few months out, and know exactly what their space configuration will look like," said Steve van der Molen, VP of meeting operations for the Atlantic City region at Caesars Entertainment Corporation. "The air wall solution we designed (we have over 1,000) allows for easy adaptability to the customer's needs."

"We have more linear feet of air wall in two ballrooms than in any ballrooms of their size in the world," said Michael Massari, Caesars' chief sales officer. The air walls can be divided into 27 sections, which lets 5,000 attendees of a conference's general session move into smaller breakout sessions for 50 to 200 people.

The upgraded space also lets Caesars make sure that the venue's technology was up-to-date. Crestron Technologies installed touchscreen displays and configured the venue's sound and lighting requirements in each breakout room and ballroom. "With the use of a tablet we can go to the cloud and change meeting room configurations and even manage light and sound controls." This new technology has "completely changed the meeting experience" by facilitating smoother transitions and greater flexibility, van der Molen said. "Another component is that each 50,000-square-foot ballroom is designed with 140 rigging points to allow for lighting- and sound-truss installations so that we can provide various layout options."