



Pre-Conference Guide

(what you really ought to know before you go)

Airport

You probably have your flights booked already, but if you can do so, try to fly in to Terminals 2 or 3 at Phoenix Sky Harbor. The giant Terminal 4 includes Southwest and U.S. Air and is madness.



It takes unusually long to get checked bags on the carousel at Terminal 4. In some cases, expect 20+ minutes. You definitely have time to use the restroom, get a soda, or buy a snow globe between deplaning and baggage claim.

For legit AZ souvenirs, the Arizona Highways shop in Terminal 4 is nice (although of course pricey). Oaxaca Mexican food in Terminal 4 is a good local institution with an airport outlet.

Ground Transportation

Note that the conference resort IS NOT NEAR THE AIRPORT. It is located on the outskirts of Scottsdale on the Yavapai/Fort McDowell reservation. It's beautiful, but it's about 26 miles from the airport.

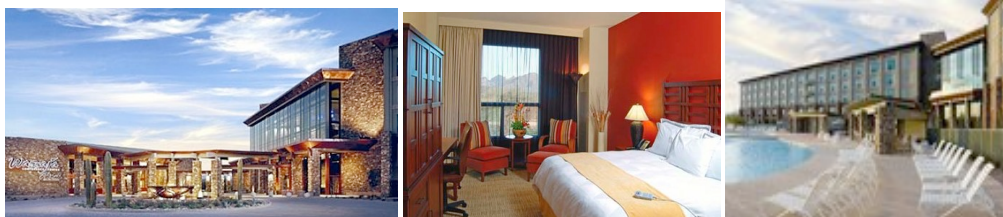


Cabs from the airport to the resort will run \$50+. You may want to rent a car. Daily rates in Phoenix with airport pickup and drop-off start at \$34/day for a standard. Thrifty appears to be the least expensive at this time.

Also note that Google Maps directions to the resort are very wrong. They have a different casino on a different reservation mapped. So, if you're using Google maps, search for "Fort Mc Dowell Gaming Center" – that's the casino next door – to get accurate directions.

Hotel

Opened in December, 2005 The Radisson Fort McDowell Resort is a 4-diamond property with solid 4-star averages on TripAdvisor. 250 rooms total. They do a substantial meetings and group business.



A very nice pool area with two heated swimming pools and two whirlpools is a resort highlight. The pools close at 11pm.

The Amethyst spa and fitness center has a nice selection of machines and free weights, and is open 24 hours. Spa services are available from 9am – 7pm. They offer a complete array of massages, facials and the like. It's not a very big spa, however, so if you're interested in a massage (perhaps during my panel on email best practices!) you should call (480) 836-5300 and make a reservation. If you do want to make a reservation when you're here, the spa books all appointments from the resort gift shop.

Conference attendees receive 15% off spa services.

Room notes:

- Ask for a balcony and/or a higher floor Exceptional desert and pool views in many cases.
- All rooms include free wi-fi, bottled water, newspaper, local calls, in-room safe, valet parking, etc.
- Ask for a Sleep Number bed. They are available in some rooms, but not all.

The hotel has a business center with 4 computers, a printer, etc.

The concierge when we are at the hotel is Cynthia. She's excellent. Go see her if you need anything.

Eats & Booze

The resort is not really walking distance to anything. The on-site restaurant and lounge Anhala is quite good. Classic dishes with bold, regional preparations. Dinner entrees include Grilled Buffalo Tenderloin (\$32), Pan Seared Halibut (\$28), Pepper Crusted Sea Scallops (\$26). Dinner is served 5:30pm to 11pm.



The hotel bar is solid, with a good selection of spirits, beer and wine.

The resort offers a free shuttle to Fountain Hills (about 10 minutes), a small, beautiful suburb. Once you're finished in town, the restaurant will call the resort to pick you up.

3 recommended Fountain Hills restaurants:

- The Steakhouse at Desert Canyon (killer steaks)
- TerraNostra (solid Italian trattoria)
- Water's Edge (great patio overlooking Fountain Hills famous fountain)

3 recommended bars (the Gary Vaynerchuk section) :

- Overtime Grill (sports bar with good food if you need to catch the baseball playoffs. Also near the fountain)
- VU Wine Bar and Café (beautiful deserts views)
- Grapeables Fine Wines (190 wines available, located right next to the fountain)



Fountain Hills is a master-planned community that was built to surround “the fountain” which is sort of like the geyser “Old Faithful” if it was machine-operated and ran like clockwork. The fountain really is something to see (you can glimpse it from parts of the resort). It goes off every hour on the hour and stays on for 15 minutes. Water shoots to a height of 562 feet, which is about 558 feet higher than most fountains.

Conference

Marketing Profs expects 250-300 attendees. A great turnout, but small enough to be personal.



Registration begins Wednesday morning at 7:30. Registration will be in the Wassaja Foyer. Badges will be needed to get into functions, so keep them on.

Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the resort, so Twitter away.

The conference is having an official conference dinner Wednesday night from 6-8pm outside by the pool area. You’ll need to RSVP when you check in. My vote is that we go to dinner on site, and go out afterwards. Dinner off-site Thursday night at one of the restaurants above, perhaps.

Marketing Profs requests business casual. It is the desert, after all.

Weather

Weather should be perfect. Highs of 85. Lows will be in the mid to high 50’s. Note though that Fountain Hills is on well, a hill, and can be breezy. It might feel a bit colder than high 50’s to some people. Also, Arizona has a constitutionally mandated air-conditioning addiction, so conference rooms could be chilly.



Casino

The hotel is adjacent to the Fort McDowell Casino, one of Arizona’s largest with 775 slot machines and 24 table games, and is open always.



Smoking is still legal in casinos in Arizona (the only place it is legal indoors). However, Fort McDowell has a sizable smoke-free area.

All the latest slot machines are available, including Deal or No Deal and a new roulette slot machine.

The poker room is one of the more comprehensive in the state (although the serious players go to Casino Arizona). Hold `em, Omaha, etc.

Also, there is significant blackjack (21) action on site. Table limits are \$2 - \$500 per hand. Aces can be split up to 4 times, they pay double on 7-7-7 hands, and seven card Charlie (7 cards under 21) is an automatic winner. The casino also has live Pai Gow Poker (tons of fun) and 3-card Poker tables.

The casino restaurants are under renovation (thankfully), but the buffet remains open (naturally). Full bar is available.

Golf

Unfortunately, the spectacular golf club We-Ko-Pa is largely closed for overseeding during the conference (in Arizona, we change grass types from Bermuda to Rye in the winter). However, the Cholla course opens for winter play on Friday, October 24. If you're staying in the area an extra day or more try to make it out there. Reservations available at the resort or (480) 836.9000 Fees are \$85.



The good news is that two other excellent courses that are very near the resort have finished their overseeding and are open for play.

- Eagle Mountain (480) 816-1234 Rates are \$125 but they have frequent specials for booking online www.eaglemtn.com
- Sunridge Canyon (480) 837-5100 Rates are just \$59 if you book online www.sunridgegolf.com
- I prefer Eagle Mountain to Sunridge Canyon, but both are great and the \$59 rate at Sunridge Canyon is a steal. All of these are desert courses. Bring lots of balls.

I Look Forward to Meeting You. I'll be speaking at "What Your Customers Really Think of Your Email Program" Wednesday at gam. If you need anything at the conference, I'm @jaybaer



**Created by Jason Baer of
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A life-long Arizona resident and 15-year digital marketing consultant, I want attendees to love AZ – so more conferences get booked here.

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