



**VERIFIED  
FACILITATOR**  
PROGRAM

**CATALOG**



## Overview

The role of a MPI Chapter Facilitator goes far beyond the fundamentals of facilitation experience and requires a unique additional perspective of having come from being an MPI Member and, more importantly, having held a leadership role.

Chapter Facilitators are required to have a comprehensive understanding of and be well-versed in MPI's overall global objectives for its Chapters and the global brand while bringing an effective and proven facilitation and training skill set to this role.

The MPI Facilitator and Chapter Training Committee (FACT), Chapter Member Advisory Council (CMAC) and their subcommittees worked to better define our MPI Chapter Facilitator program to be a more streamlined process from initial application to post-retreat review. New to the program is a requirement of a Chapter Facilitator satisfaction score of 3.75% or higher from Chapter retreat feedback surveys. This ongoing evaluation will ensure our Chapters are receiving the best of the best from this program commitment. All MPI Chapters will be required to engage an MPI-Verified Facilitator for chapter retreats beginning July 1, 2022.

Following is a complete list of MPI-Verified Facilitators for your consideration. After reviewing their information, plan to interview three Facilitators during your selection process.

### Best Practices for Engagement:

- Consider skill level, experience, cultural fit, facilitator strengths and your budget.
- Plan to use the same facilitator for both your annual and mid-year retreats.
- Engage your Facilitator early to provide ample time for retreat planning.
- Engage your Chapter Operations Manager during the retreat planning process.
- Be transparent about chapter challenges and opportunities.
- Consider your Board's bandwidth when determining the length of your retreat (annual retreats are typically 2 full days, mid-year retreats can often be accomplished in 1 full day).
- Communicate early and often with your Board about pre-work to set the expectations for your time together at the retreat.

## Pieter Allaerts

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### MPI Leadership Experience

Chair of MPI's European Advisory Council from January 2019 to December 2020. President of MPI Belgium chapter from July 2014 to July 2016.

### Facilitation Strengths

- Open to Change
- Authentic & Positive

### Biography

"Hospitality runs in my veins. Positivity drives me in the right direction. Trust defines who I am."

As a son, father, husband and manager, my passion comes from the pleasure of inspiring others while earning their confidence, showing them gratitude, sharing their support and always striving to serve with excellence. Whether it's in the kitchen (I'm a foodie), at work (building mutual respect) or riding my bike (pushing my limits, freeing my mind), it's always about reaching my full potential so others can reach theirs.

I've enjoyed 21 years in hospitality (InterContinental Hotels group and Dolce Hotels & Resorts – 14 years in the meetings (MICE) industry, 10 years as volunteer for MPI (from VP Finance, Belgium chapter President to chair of the EU council), and proud winner of some individual & team awards at Dolce Hotels & Resorts as well as IACC (International Association of Conference centers).

## **Melissa Benowitz, CMP**

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### **MPI Leadership Experience**

Melissa has served as committee chair, vice president and president of the Potomac Chapter spanning a volunteer time of 10 years. After completing her Immediate Past President role in 2001, she became the Chapter's Association Manager which she still holds.

### **Facilitation Strengths**

Melissa has facilitated many leadership trainings on the chapter and at MPI Chapter Business Summits. With her tenure as a chapter leader/manager she has been involved in the planning, and execution of over 50-chapter board retreats. She not only understands the objectives a chapter board faces, but she has the skill set to guide them to work cooperatively to achieve synergies.

As the Association Manager, Melissa has assisted volunteers in their development as leaders with many attributing her mentorship and guidance to their achievement as chapter president. Her extensive experience in the world of volunteer management aids her in knowing how to manage conversation so individuals are heard, and group collaboration is maintained. She creates a welcoming environment that encourages teamwork and utilizes her charismatic demeanor to steer the group dynamics into a collaborative direction.

### **Biography**

Melissa has been in the meetings industry since high school and attended the top hotel school in the country, Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration for her college degree. Her involvement in the hospitality industry has been consistent for over 35 years. Her career includes hotel convention services, hotel sales (both on property and at national levels), convention bureau representation, meeting planning, and association management.

Melissa has been a member of Meeting Professionals International for 30 years and has served in a variety of leadership roles with the Potomac Chapter including President. She was honored with the Planner of the Year award Marketplace of Excellence and recognized as the MPI Potomac's Distinguished Leader, an illustrious award presented to a chapter member who has contributed to the continued enhancement of the organization and the global meetings industry.

She serves as the Association Manager for Meeting Professionals International Potomac Chapter. A role she has excelled at for over 20 years. In this position Melissa's duties include strategic planning, leadership development, volunteer coordination, membership recruitment, financial administration,

## Melissa Benowitz, CMP (Cont.)

event planning, sponsorship solicitation, site selection and contract negotiation and managing a membership of over 700 hospitality professionals. Melissa completed the MPI Chapter Administrator

Programs with a 100% pass rate.

Melissa is a firm believer in continual professional development. After earning her Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation in 1999, she became a facilitator of a local CMP Preparatory Study Course to teach others on subject matter for the CMP Exam. She has presented multiple times on adult education methods to meeting professional organizations at national conferences as well as authored numerous articles about meeting planning in industry publications. Melissa mentors many young meeting professionals and was named one of the *Top 40 in the 40s Meeting Professionals* by the Senior Meeting Professionals Industry Network. She currently serves on the Industry Advisory Committee for the Portland, OR Convention and Visitors Bureau.

In addition to association management, Melissa is a meeting planner professional. Her experience ranges from corporate product launches and sales missions, corporate sponsored public trade shows to association annual conventions. Melissa has managed multiple meetings ranging in size from 50 – 12,000 attendees held across the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Asia. Melissa's success in performing as a seamless conduit between clients, facility contacts and other vendors, not only resulted in a positive meeting experience for all parties but repeat clients. Melissa is well known for her attention to detail, clear vision, forward movement, and her unique ability to respect people's opinions and passions while maintaining processes and procedures.

## Mark Bice, CMP

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### MPI Leadership Experience

Past President of the New England Chapter, VP Finance, Membership, Education, Director Education, MPI Chapter Facilitator since 2015

### Facilitation Strengths

- Listening and ensuring clarity and understanding among Board members. Challenging Board members to think and act on attainable, measurable, goals.
- Helping Boards identify areas of strength and celebration as well as areas of need. Understanding that volunteer Boards and committee members need a special type of supportive and nurturing leadership style and assisting Board members in finding the right approach to success.
- Showing my appreciation for the passion and commitment I see in Board members every day.

### Biography

Mark is a seasoned meetings industry professional with experience in all aspects including operations, sales, marketing, and meeting planning.

He has worked as a Regional VP with HPN Global for 14 years and has been the meeting planner for an Ohio-based Association for 6.

Loves and Passions: Good food, Dave Matthews Band, his two kids, and his labradoodle Sydney.

## **Carolyn Browning, CMP, CMM**

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### **MPI Leadership Experience**

- Held several BOD positions for MPI WestField including a two-year term as President
- Helped develop and chair the MPI WestField Chapter's Leadership Development committee
- Participated on two MPI Global task forces

### **Facilitation Strengths**

- Able to keenly discern what's needed
- Able to hold a team to task
- Well organized
- Flexible – able to adapt agenda during retreat to meet changing needs

### **Biography**

Carolyn has held several MPI WestField Chapter Board & committee positions in her 20+ year membership with MPI, including a two-year term as President. She has earned many accolades through the MPI WestField Chapter, including Chapter Manager of the Year and in 2009 was given a Lifetime Achievement Award. She was a part of two MPI Global task forces. A lifelong learner, Carolyn earned her CMP and CMM and most recently her HMCC.

As of 2021, Carolyn has facilitated retreats for the MPI Carolinas, Heartland, Indiana, New Mexico, Washington State, WestField and Wisconsin chapters, as well as worked with other associations in their board planning efforts. She is an independent planner, runs CMP study groups and loves guest lecturing and teaching meeting planning courses at a local colleges and universities.

## David Chapa, CMP

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### MPI Leadership Experience

Registration Committee  
Director of Industry Relations  
Director of Recruitment and Networking

### Facilitation Strengths

- Promotion of hearing all voices and extracting ideas and thoughts from all at the table (diversity/inclusion)
- Patience during difficult conversations while maintaining order/keeping the meeting timeline on track

### Biography

David Chapa, CMP, is a veteran of the events industry with over 20 years of meeting and events experience. He has been an MPI member since the 1990s and a proponent of continuing education. Professionally, David has worked hosting events at a conference center, worked for Texas State Associations, was an in-house contractor at a Fortune 100 company, and led corporate events for a Fortune 500 company.

His experience in meeting facilitation has been in corporate meetings focused on budget alignment/realignment, strategy, setting goals/objectives, and establishing and positioning a clear vision for the future.

David holds a BA from The University of Texas at Austin and an MBA from Regis University.



## Nicole Coon, CMP

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### MPI Leadership Experience

- MPI Minnesota Chapter President 2019-2020: as president, alongside current and future leaders of the chapter, developed, built, and implemented a strategic plan including key initiatives for MPI Minnesota. Preparation and engaging key stakeholders were paramount in the success of the plan. In addition, the chapter refreshed the mission and vision and identified five core values of the chapter. Clear, consistent communication at a grassroots level explained why the plan is vital for the chapter's future.
- VP of Education 2017-2018, Director of Education, 2016-2017: as VP of Education, along with select Board members, developed an Event Specification Guide as a master resource for events and programming. The ESG covers volunteers responsible, key contacts, event/venue info, venue details, event pricing for registration, event schedule, onsite announcements, learner objectives, session details, speaker info. and bio. The ESG also outlines a marketing plan, event sponsors and event specific benefits, revenue, and some accounting tracking. The board currently uses the ESG.
- Annual Education Conference Committee Chair 2015-2018

### Facilitation Strengths

- Membership
- Leadership Development
- Meeting/Event Planning
- Budgeting
- Strategic Planning
- Teamwork/Teambuilding
- Conflict Resolution

### Biography

Your chapter may be striving to stabilize or grow membership, or maybe your chapter is struggling with the budget and making tough decisions to yield different results or possibly is straining to keep your volunteers motivated and energized. I understand the challenges of encouraging your board, empowering them to lead their teams - pulling together for success. I. See. You. Chapter leader...really, I do.

As senior staff of an association, my tenure has given me the opportunity of experience in administration, education, awards, marketing, meeting and event planning, budgeting, strategic planning, sales, project management, leadership development, mentor, and coach.

## Nicole Coon, CMP (Cont.)

My role as your guide for your chapter's retreat is to understand your key goals, develop an agenda to address those items, be a neutral guide in engaging and thoughtful (and maybe uncomfortable) conversations, produce an effective event, with ownership from everyone involved and ensure that your board's objectives are met.

What you can expect from me as your facilitator:

- Engagement - cultivate an environment where everyone's voice can be heard - even opposing viewpoints, get the job done and have some fun.
- Neutrality - as an unbiased party I'm able to hear the conversation without any emotion tied to it and ask the tough questions.
- Flexibility - adjustments can be made to the agenda based on what the group needs compared to what was planned.
- Action- leaving the retreat your board will know next steps - who, what and when, helping you as a leader with expectations management.
- Connection – between your board members to one another, the ideas, and to the solutions that everyone can commit to.
- Authenticity – I'll bring my energetic and creative self with full gusto to support you.

Contact me to today about facilitating your chapter's next retreat.

### **Meet Nicole Coon**

Nicole Coon, CMP is the Vice President of Membership and Events for Housing First Minnesota who strategizes, designs, and markets a variety of events; directs membership recruitment and engagement. Recognized for creativity and attention to detail with comprehensive strength in strategic planning, stakeholder management, program development, marketing, meeting and event design, fiscal accountability, and customer service. Leveraging meetings and events as a means for advancing the organization's goals and objectives.

With over 10 years planning experience, Nicole launched her business: Greet. Offering planning, facilitation, and development services to organizations.

Nicole was MPI Member of the Year finalist and 2021 and Housing First Minnesota (formerly the Builders Association of the Twin Cities) was the 2015 MPI Rise Award recipient for Organizational Achievement. In addition, Nicole has won multiple MPI Minnesota Excellence in MPI (EMPI) awards for Meeting/Event of the Year and Outstanding Planner Member. Her personal mission is to make things lovely, and people feel extraordinary, she supports that through entertaining, volunteering, creating, and DIYing her home in Roseville Minnesota alongside her operations manager (puppy) Hazel.

## Kate C. Copeland, MBA, CMM, CMP, CED, DES

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### MPI Leadership Experience

MPI Member of the Year 2021

Past President, MPI Connecticut River Valley 2014-2017

Chapter & Membership Advisory Council (CMAC) Member 2020-Present

Meeting Executive Advisory Board Member 2019

WEC 2020 Content Committee Member 2019

Safety and Risk Management Advisory Board Member 2018

### Facilitation Strengths

- Strategy/Business Analysis
- Leadership Development
- Volunteer Management
- Membership Recruitment/Retention
- Finance

### Biography

Kate Copeland, MBA, CMM, CMP, CED, DES is the Assistant Director of University Events and Conference Services at the University of Connecticut, where she oversees a team of nine. She leads the department in event design and strategy and is an expert in technology initiatives, including Cvent, Gather, and virtual event platforms.

Kate has been heavily involved in MPI since joining in 2011. In 2014, Kate was awarded the MPI Connecticut River Valley (MPI CRV) President's Award for exceptional service to the chapter. She went on to serve as President of the MPI CRV chapter in 2015-2016. During her term, she led MPI CRV to the highest member satisfaction results in past 5 years, increased member recruitment by 83%, tripled the number of volunteers, and grew adjusted gross margin by 20%. Since then, Kate has continued to volunteer at both the chapter level and on various MPI Global committees and task forces. She currently serves on the MPI Chapter & Membership Advisory Council (CMAC), and the Facilitator and Chapter Training (FACT) sub-committee. Kate also began actively facilitating MPI chapter retreats in 2018. When it comes to MPI, Kate lives by the motto, "you get out what you put in." In recognition of her commitment to MPI, she has been awarded the 2021 MPI RISE Award for Member of the Year.

Kate earned her B.A. in Politics and Economics from Mount Holyoke College and her MBA with a concentration in management and marketing from the University of Connecticut. She is also the past Chairperson and CEO of Arts for Learning CT, the largest arts education non-profit in the state. Kate resides in Connecticut with her husband, son, and dog, Teddy.

## Anne Dalgaard, CMM

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### MPI Leadership Experience

- EAC (2019 + 2020 + 2022)
- Immediate Past President Denmark Chapter (2019-2022)
- President + VP Finance Denmark Chapter (2018-2019)
- VP Education Denmark Chapter (2017-2018)
- Board member Denmark Chapter (2006-2007)

### Facilitation Strengths

- Developing business plans and budgets
- Creating value for boards and members
- Succession planning

### Biography

Anne Dalgaard is Event Portfolio Manager at the Danish Society of Engineers – a union of 140,000 members (and counting) and 3,000 annual events organized in collaboration with nearly 1,000 member volunteers.

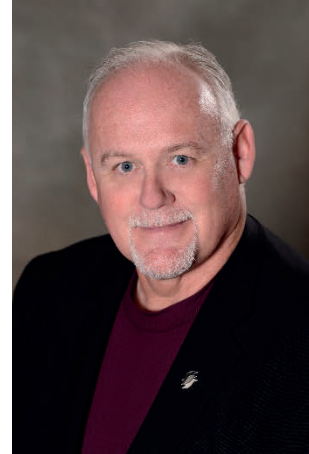
She is also the founder of EventAnne, a consultancy in Strategic Experience Design where she helps local and international clients create design and strategy concepts for events that engage, inspire and create value.

Anne holds a Danish degree in experience management, a Certificate in Meeting Management (CMM), a certificate in facilitation, and draws on more than 20 years of experience in the meetings and events industry, mainly in event and experience design for association conferences.

Furthermore, Anne is member of the European Advisory Council as well as Past President of MPI Scandinavia. Based in Copenhagen, Denmark, Anne is married to a fellow passionate event geek and #CruiserByHeart.

## Steven G. Foster, CMP

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### MPI Leadership Experience

A 30-year member of MPI, Steven is a Past-President of the Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter and has served in a variety of roles on International Committees and Councils; including Facilitator and Chapter Training, RISE Awards, Chapter Advisory, Marketing and the MPI Foundation. He was among the first group of industry leaders to participate in MPI's Preferred Facilitator Program, and in 2004 he was inducted into the MPI International Community of Honorees.

### Facilitation Strengths

- Building a "Leadership Culture" of adaptable strategies, skills, and strengths
- Identifying what an organization needs in order to be successful and sustainable
- Purposeful influence development, leadership training and team-building models

### Biography

Steven G. Foster, CMP, is Managing Partner of Foster+Fathom, a Leadership Training and Goodness Development Group in Dallas, TX. An award-winning keynote speaker, author, business consultant, strategic planning facilitator and TRIBE-Builder, he collaborates with corporate, association and non-profit organizations to build high-performance teams, and was named a Small Business Success by Fortune Magazine.

## **Alissa Hurley, CMM, CED**

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### **MPI Leadership Experience**

President-Elect, Toronto Chapter (2022/23)

Member, Canadian Advisory Council

Director, Special Education Projects, Toronto Chapter

Chair, Public Relations Committee, Toronto Chapter

Member, Global Corporate Circle of Excellence

Member, CMM Advisory Board

### **Facilitation Strengths**

- Creative Problem Solving
- Strategic Planning
- Active Listening
- Ability to quickly get to the core of complex issues
- Outcomes oriented

### **Biography**

Alissa has spent the last 20 years helping organizations achieve their business goals and marketing objectives through meetings and events with an uncanny talent for coming up with unique strategies, prioritizing opportunities and dealing with the unknowns in complex situations. She brings a holistic perspective on the meetings and events industry based on her experiences as a corporate event professional, agency business leader and supplier.

Alissa's background includes senior management roles at Encore (FMAV), Lenos Software and Maritz Canada, where she was recognized for developing innovative client solutions while maintaining a dedicated focus on achieving strategic business objectives. Currently, as Vice President, Canada for McVeigh Global Meetings and Events (PRIME Event Partners), she leads a team of event professionals passionate about creating human connections.

She believes in continuous learning and knowledge sharing. In 2016, Alissa became the first Certified Event Designer (CED) in Canada and the first certified instructor of the Event Canvas methodology in North America. She also spent 6 years as a faculty member for the Event Management Certificate Program at Mount Royal University.

In 2019, Alissa was inducted into the Canadian Meetings and Events Hall of Fame as an Industry Innovator. She holds the Certified Meeting Manager (CMM) designation and has been an active member of Meeting Professionals International (MPI) for over 20 years.

## Tara Liaschenko, CMM

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### MPI Leadership Experience

Tara has served the Tampa Bay Area Chapter Board in numerous roles including Chapter President.

Expanding her commitment to MPI, she has served on a global level for the following:

- International Membership Council
- Community Membership Advisory Council (Chair)
- Chapter Advisory Council (Chair)
- WEC Knowledge Council
- RISE Awards Judging Panel
- Diversity & Inclusion Taskforce
- RISE Up Taskforce (Chair)
- FACT Committee (Committee Member and Chair)
- Chair of the 50th Anniversary

### Facilitation Strengths

- Succession Planning – Volunteer Recruitment, Delegation and Management
- Leadership Development
- Membership
- Education
- Team Building
- Strategic Planning

### Biography

With over 25 years of planning experience, Tara Liaschenko is an award-winning professional who has earned an impeccable reputation for creativity and excellence in the event and meeting planning industry. She is the recipient of the 2015 MPI Global RISE Award for Member of the Year. Ms. Liaschenko is the Founder and Creative Executive Officer of The Link Event Professionals, Inc., a global company based in Tampa, Florida dedicated to planning services covering all aspects of meetings and events. An accomplished speaker, Ms. Liaschenko also facilitates board, staff, client retreats, for the last 14 years. Her company also expanded to facilitate strategic planning and leading business development planning for corporate and nonprofit clients as well as client advisory boards and focus groups. With strong community commitment, long-standing relationships with ethical and reliable vendors, and adept knowledge of production, Ms. Liaschenko is at the forefront of her industry consistently delivering her clients successful meetings and events. Her most recent accomplishments include being inducted into the MPI 50 Most Influential and International Community of Honorees.

## Cahal Mowery, CMP

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### MPI Leadership Experience

Cahal Mowery has been an active member of MPI since 2012 and was on the board of the Houston Area Chapter from 2013-2018, becoming the President of that Chapter. As a member of the MPI Rocky Mountain Chapter from 2018-2022, Cahal served as Chapter Liaison of the Student Club as well as serving on their Nominations Selection Committee. In 2022 Cahal became a MPI Verified Facilitator and in 2023, Cahal moved to Chicago and became a member of the Chicago Area Chapter.

### Facilitation Strengths

- Meetings Industry Business Acumen – as the Vice President of Sales at Choose Chicago, Cahal is highly involved in day-to-day business interactions within the meetings industry, communicates regularly with hundreds of hospitality partners throughout the country, and has frequent exchanges with clients. Throughout all these dealings, Cahal is very current with the business environment of the meetings industry and can leverage that knowledge when facilitating for a MPI Chapter.
- Millennial Leadership – as the President of the MPI Houston Area Chapter (and Director of Sales of a JW Marriott) at age 27, Cahal has first-hand experience with leading teams whose members often have far more industry experience than he does. Given that background, Cahal enjoys collaborating with and coaching other young leaders, including MPI Presidents, in similar situations as well as young teams on how to best embrace your “inner-Millennial” while leveraging all the knowledge and resources at the table to drive success.

### Biography

As Choose Chicago’s Vice President of Sales, Cahal Mowery blends his enthusiasm for the industry and his sales leadership experience to lead a sales team that positions an array of properties ranging from the largest convention center in North America, McCormick Place, to boutique luxury properties. Cahal’s career journey began with attending the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Management at the University of Houston to pursue his passion of hospitality. Upon a final semester abroad and graduation, Cahal joined Visit Houston as a National Account Executive on the Convention Sales Team. After fulfilling multiple sales markets over the course of 6 years with Visit Houston, Cahal joined the JW Marriott Houston Downtown as the Director of Sales & Catering before joining Visit Denver as the Director of Convention Sales. Through his experience, Cahal has earned his Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation, has served as President for the Meeting Professionals International-Houston Area Chapter (MPI-HAC), has been named a recipient of Connects 40 Under 40 2014 class as well as PCMA’s 20 in their Twenties 2018 class, and earned his MBA from the C.T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston. When not in the office, Cahal enjoys cooking, wine (he is a Certified Sommelier), staying active in the outdoors, and traveling.



**Rick Weaver**  
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### **MPI Leadership Experience**

- 1994-1999 Served on/in various committees and board positions with MPI Northern CA (including Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee)
- 1999-2001 Served in various board positions with MPI Tennessee
- 2001-2002 Served on the board for MPI South Florida
- 2002-2003 Served on the board for MPI Greater New York
- 2003-2009 Served on the board for MPI WestField (including Chapter President 2008-2009)
- Served on various MPI International Committees including Chapter Structure Review, PEC Advisory Task Force, and the Chapter Facilitator Task Force.

### **Facilitation Strengths**

- Active Listener
- Can Easily Synthesize Discussions
- Authentic
- Impartial
- Enthusiastic
- Patient
- Deliverables-Oriented

### **Biography**

Energetic and innovative speaker, association consultant, business coach, facilitator and author; Rick Weaver, inspires and teaches powerful and practical solutions for achieving the maximum EXPERIENCE in presentation skills, strategic planning and leadership/volunteer development. Rick has accumulated 30+ years in the hospitality industry and has facilitated over 350 successful client meetings and events since 1999. Rick's background as a professional facilitator, as well as his extensive experience in volunteer management of 501c3 not for profit associations, brings a practical breadth of knowledge to the table that continues to meet and exceed his client's needs.