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September/October 2007

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Defensive Contract Negotiation: When the Future is Murky

► John S. Foster, Esq. CHME
September Platinum Series Speaker



To be a successful negotiator in today's meeting and convention industry, you must negotiate defensively. This is true for both planners and hoteliers. To ignore or misunderstand this reality can potentially expose your company or organization to future disputes and expensive losses.

Every hotel contract involves the risk of under-performance or nonperformance on both sides. These risks should be dealt with up front in detail to avoid potential conflicts and unwanted results in the future. If you are questioning whether it's worth it to spend extra time to negotiate the fine print, remember this. If you ask the other side for something before the contract is signed it's called "negotiating." If you ask for something after the contract is signed it's called "begging." It's much better to ask for favorable details while you are on the negotiating side.

Here are some risk management tips and strategies to consider when negotiating your future meeting contracts:

1. Use a Request for Proposal (RFP): Using an RFP to choose sites and hotels is the best way for planners to separate the bona fide prospects from the suspects. The RFP can be used to determine which hotels are agreeable to the terms that are important to the meeting sponsor and which ones aren't. The agreeable hotels are the ones you negotiate with first.

2. Don't agree to any Attrition or Performance Clause unless circumstances justify it: Hoteliers created attrition clauses in the late 1980's and early 90's to transfer the risk

of low pickup from the hotel to the meeting sponsor. The purpose of an attrition clause is to set minimum performance requirements for meeting sponsors. This made sense at the time. With the economy on the upswing, hotels had the clout to insist on minimum guarantees. Hotels "sold" the new idea to planners of using attrition clauses in group contracts. Hotels used the premise that the hotel would take the group's contracted room block out of inventory and protect it from other groups. This is a sound premise in a tight market. If a hotel holds your group rooms out of inventory and turns away



other legitimate business, it's reasonable to require your group to pay for the rooms your group didn't use and the hotel couldn't sell to anyone else. The legal term for this is "detrimental reliance." In a market where there is a high demand for rooms, a hotel relies on the performance terms in the contract to its detriment when it turns away other business and your group doesn't pickup all of the blocked rooms. Contrast the detrimental reliance theory of asking for attrition damages to today's circumstances. The national average occupancy percentage for hotels in the U.S. during 2002 was in the low 60's. That means some cities did better than this and some did worse. First tier cities generally had better occupancies than second and third cities.

agenda staff

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From the Editor's Desk

Inspiring 'Joie de Vivre'

► **Lisa Lanting, CMP**
Preventive Cardiovascular
Nurses Association
Madison, WI



This year, I had the honor of receiving funding from the Women's Leadership Initiative to attend the MPI World Education Congress (WEC) in Montréal. It was truly "magnifique," and I feel so grateful to have been a part of it. The educational sessions and networking events were all top-notch and I left Montréal feeling energized and inspired by all that I had learned and experienced.

I felt a similar sense of inspiration when I was reading through the articles submitted for this issue. You are in for a treat! In these pages, you will hear from current and future leaders, award winners, and trailblazers, all of whom contribute great things to the meetings industry and to the Wisconsin Chapter.

In an effort to keep you up-to-date on the latest trends, we are proud to feature John Foster, Esq., CHME, who provides an overview of best practices in contract negotiation. You won't want to miss his Platinum Series Presentation at the MPI-WI Chapter Meeting in September.

Marie Johnson shares her personal experiences from MPI-WEC, which included cheering for two of our MPI-WI leaders as they took home MPI's most prestigious awards.

Marlena Deutsch explains the importance of community engagement in creating successful events, and on a similar note, Sara Clauder invites us to make a difference by participating in our chapter's upcoming community outreach activities.

New contributing writer, Gwen Seeboth, shows us how to motivate people and improve productivity through a simple, yet profound concept: appreciation.

If you weren't able to make it to the June Leadership Retreat, Susan Kainz has provided a nice recap of the accomplishments made by our chapter's dedicated leaders.

You'll see that volunteerism and service to others are recurring themes throughout this issue, and Michelle Eggert, CMP, challenges us to look at success from a different angle and make "service" a priority in our busy lives. I encourage you to accept this challenge and make your mark on the success of the MPI-WI Chapter.

In French, they say "joie de vivre" to describe the inspired enjoyment of life. My hope is you gain some new inspiration from this issue, and pass it on! ■

CALL FOR ARTICLES:

Do you enjoy writing? Do you have a particular topic that you'd like to research and share with your MPI-WI friends & colleagues?

We are pleased to welcome you to contribute to the richness of this newsletter by submitting an article. Please e-mail us at editor@mpiwi.org if you are interested. We are happy to assist you with ideas for articles if you need help getting started.



On The Mooove

Congratulations are in order for several of our MPI colleagues and partners:

Laura Cornell, CMP, has been promoted to Director of Sales at Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center.

Lori Fuhrmann has recently become the Director of Sales and Marketing with the brand new Crowne Plaza Milwaukee - Wauwatosa, opening in April, 2008.

Stephanie Franklin joined WPS Health Insurance as an Employee Communications Specialist.

The Waukesha County Chamber of Commerce welcomes **Sherri Povolo** as Director of Events.

Sue Lidstrom is now the Corporate Sales Manager with the Sheraton Madison Hotel.

Sara Clauder, from WPS Health Insurance, recently became engaged and is planning a Summer 2008 wedding.

Kim Jones is an Assistant Planner with Meetings & Incentives.

It has been a big year for our Rising Star award winner, **Alison Huber** (formerly Alison Barta), from the State Bar of Wisconsin, who recently got married.

The Capital Grille is happy to announce **Danica Accola** is the latest addition to their Sales and Marketing Team.

Julie Peterman, CMP, has joined Cuna Mutual Group. She is part of the Corporate Meetings and Event Team as Market & Customer Events Manager.

Kudos to the **Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center** in Madison, for receiving the platinum award as "Best Conference Center" by Corporate Report Wisconsin's Best of Wisconsin Business Awards. Congratulations to the **Kalahari Resort & Convention Center**, Wisconsin Dells, and the **Midwest Airlines Center**, Milwaukee, for also being recognized in this category. In a new "Best Of" category, the **Kalahari Resort** received top billing for "Best Hotel for Business Travel." **The Pfister Hotel**, Milwaukee, and **The American Club**, Kohler also received acknowledgement. The **Kalahari Resort** also received "Best Hotel for Business Meeting" award with the **Radisson Paper Valley Hotel**, Appleton, and **Pfister Hotel**, Milwaukee receiving honorable mention. The winners are based on an on-line ballot of more than 2,000 Corporate Report readers—CEOs, business owners, and top executives from across Wisconsin. ■



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President's Column

► **Paulette Heney, CMM**
United States Bowling Congress
Greendale, WI



As your current MPI Chapter President, I had the privilege of being a part of the first MPI International Exchange Pilot program last year. I know a lot of you have heard about this program and I am hoping that you will have the opportunity to apply for this program, the educational experience cannot even be described, not to mention the relationships with new colleagues and friendships that were developed.

The first exchange was in November when Nathaly Roux with the Belgium Chapter flew to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to participate in an educational opportunity of a lifetime.

Nathaly was wonderful, even though it was an exhausting week. She attended work with me on a Monday and participated in a convention team meeting where she met the events team and toured the United States Bowling Congress. In addition, Nathaly went to a production company and toured their facility, learning what capability they have and what they do for their clients. She spent a day with an MPI member at the Milwaukee Hilton Hotel and went to Madison to meet another MPI member with Monona Terrace Convention Center where she assisted with sales calls and received a tour of Madison. Nathaly sat in on the MPI Wisconsin Chapter Board of Directors Meeting on Wednesday evening.

She attended the MPI Wisconsin Chapter November Education Day and met several more chapter members and exhibitors. She mentioned that the MPI Wisconsin Chapter members were wonderful hosts/hostesses for an exchange professional.

As I said goodbye to Nathaly at the airport, I reflected on what a wonderful week we had. Even with so much packed into one week, I really got to know Nathaly and was truly going to miss her until I arrived in Belgium.

Nathaly and I developed a wonderful business and personal relationship. Although our lives are very different, it was truly a learning experience on both sides.

In May, 2007 I traveled to Belgium to fulfill my side of the exchange program. I was so excited to travel to Brussels and spend the week with Nathaly. What a difference in how the two of us live and work. I took the train with Nathaly daily into Brussels, attended work with Nathaly, met her colleagues and learned about her Congress coming up in June in Munich. It was interesting to see the different obstacles they encounter. For example, the day they were scheduled to move in was a bank holiday in Germany, which meant there could not be any deliveries.

Therefore, they had to make alternate arrangements for a move-in day and then communicate this change to their exhibitors. In addition, Nathaly gave me some ideas for my annual convention on how to save money with shuttles, name badges, etc.

I attended the BE Conference, which is similar to the MPI Wisconsin Chapter Education Day. I was provided 10 minutes to speak on the program, which was very well

received. Several questions were asked about how people can get involved and when MPI will launch this program. I sat in multiple breakout sessions and attended the networking events. Everyone was so welcoming to me and very interested in my position at USBC and the exchange program in general.

This truly was an educational opportunity of a lifetime that I will never forget. I met so many individuals that I will keep in touch with, that I can call on with questions, or just say hello. I have brought back an experience to my company for which I know I will never be able to repay MPI.

Although both weeks were extremely busy for Nathaly and me, they were experiences of a lifetime. We both are extremely grateful to have been part of the pilot exchange for this wonderful program.

With the new MPI vision and mission, this is a perfect time to launch this program. This program will work towards building a rich global meeting industry community and will help build human connections through relationships, ideas, and knowledge. ■



Paulette gets the royal treatment from the Belgium Convention & Visitors Bureau

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Finance: Think it's Easy?

► **Laura Cornell, CMP**
Monona Terrace Convention Center
Madison, WI



I recently had the occasion to visit Morgan Data Solutions' office for my official orientation to the finances of MPI. As VP of Finance, it was a total learning experience to find out the nuts and bolts of the financial operations and to find out the flow of paperwork before the numbers are presented to the board for the monthly board meetings. It was interesting to see where the paper goes from the time that it is delivered by the postal service to the time that I am signing checks.

Part and parcel to that information is the data that the Board receives and that you as a contributing member get to see via these articles. You should know that your chapter is in good financial standing and that at the board level—across all divisions, we are doing everything in our power to tow a strong fiscal line and keep our chapter in the black.

Please keep in mind that we are on a fiscal year that runs from July 1-June 30th of each year. Some of the year-end highlights that I am pleased to share with you are the following:

- We ended up the year in the positive by \$4,782.46. This includes a \$1,500 donation to the MPI Foundation on behalf of the MPI-WI Chapter.
- Advertising: We took in \$3,000 more than budgeted! (*Thanks advertisers*)
- Raffle: An incredible amount of \$4,300 was raised in the raffles at the monthly education meetings.
- Education: Michelle Eggert did an outstanding job of getting the most out of speaker expenses.

As you can see, our chapter does pretty well by maximizing income and minimizing expenses. This doesn't happen without dedicated members and a dedicated board.

As we get underway this fiscal year, please continue to support your MPI-WI Chapter. Without your support, we could not continue to provide the excellent educational programming throughout the year and all of the other ancillary services that are a part of your membership. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give me a call at 608-261-4016 or email at lcornell@mononaterrace.com. ■

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3. Under-forecast your room block: If planners have learned anything during the recent past it's that the best room block forecasting strategy is to hope for the best but plan for the worst. If your group used 1000 rooms at your last annual meeting, it would be prudent to book less than that for the next annual meeting. Maybe a 700 room block would be a good place to start. Unless the economy takes a sharp turn upward in the near future, you can always book more rooms later if you need them. Groups that use more rooms than originally contracted are always held in higher regard by hotels than groups that overbook and want to unload unused rooms on the hotel. Many planners are perpetually concerned that they won't have enough rooms to accommodate all of their attendees and that rooms won't be available when they ask for more. If you're one of those planners, do a risk benefit analysis. This analysis compares the risk of not having enough rooms in the headquarters hotel causing attendees making late reservations to stay elsewhere versus the risk of booking too many rooms in the hotel and having to pay thousands of dollars in attrition damages. Those are the options. Pick one and prepare your contract accordingly.

4. Be strategic in how the Attrition (Performance) clause is worded: If circumstances justify the meeting sponsor giving minimum guarantees to the hotel in the form of an attrition (performance) clause, the next critical step is to be strategic how the clause is worded. The goal of every performance clause is to compensate the injured party for its losses if the contract is not performed in full. This point of law is undisputed. The sticking point in hotel contract negotiations today is determining how to apply the rules to calculate the amount of revenue the hotel is entitled to if the meeting sponsor under-performs.

5. Include contract terms that allow the meeting sponsor (or the attendees) to replace cancelled rooms with substitute names either before or after the cut-off date. Most hotels will agree to this but you usually have to ask for it.

6. Include a term in the contract that late reservations will be accepted at the group rate up to the last room available in the Hotel. Hotel's use yield management policies to justify accepting reservations from a group after the cut-off date on a "space and rate availability." This policy is contradictory to the legal principle in contract law that says one party cannot interfere with or make more difficult the other side's performance of the contract. By raising the group's rates after the cut-off date, the hotel is discouraging attendees from making a reservation at that hotel. (The fact that this policy only affects attendees that are making late reservations is irrelevant). If a hotel wants to use yield management to raise rates that's fine but attrition damages should therefore not apply.

7. Include a formula for how future rates will be set. Hotels and meeting sponsors negotiate rates for long-term future bookings by referencing current group rates plus a maximum percentage increase. To be reasonable, the future rate increases should allow the

hotel to adjust rates according to inflation but should also require the future rates to be competitive with comparable hotels nearby. To accomplish this, the contract should allow rates to be adjusted by the lesser of the change in the Consumer Price Index-Urban (CPI-U) or a certain percentage off the hotel's published rates. The percentage off the future published rates should be equal to the percentage that the current group rates are below the published rates.

8. Shift the risk of attrition in sub-blocks to the organization booking the rooms in the sub-block. This is accomplished by stating in the contract that the hotel will require credit card information from companies blocking ten or more rooms within the overall block. The hotel should then look to these companies for payment if their block isn't fully used.

9. Don't agree to pay both attrition and meeting room rental unless your rooms to space ratio is out of balance. The general rule of thumb is that an in-house group is entitled to complimentary meeting space in the same percentage as the number of group rooms used in the hotel. For example, if your group uses 30% of the rooms allocated for group business in the hotel then your group is entitled to 30% of the meeting space on a complimentary basis. In the same example, if your group needs 50% of the meeting space then you should pay for the extra 20%. On the other hand, if your rooms to space ratio is balanced and you are required to pay for attrition and for meeting room rental, you are agreeing to pay twice to cure the same deficiency.

10. Don't take unreasonable risks by insisting on a comprehensive "Termination and Excuse of Performance" clause. A comprehensive clause will provide for partial as well total nonperformance. It will also reference any event or occurrence that is outside either party's control that prevents one or both of the parties from performing in part or in whole. Insist on including references to terrorism, threat of terrorism or reasonable fear for personal safety by potential attendees. This term in the agreement is not intended to be a free pass for either side to walk away from the contract unless the reason is valid. However, this term is intended to prevent injustice by requiring one side or the other to pay damages for nonperformance when the cause was outside their reasonable control. This concept is supported in both contract statutes and case law.

11. Provide in the contract for the possibility of a new hotel being built. When the economy turns around in the future, new hotels will be built. Every planner (and hotelier) cringes when the news comes out after the contract is signed that a new hotel will be built in close proximity to the headquarter hotel already under contract. The new hotel will invariably undercut the rate at nearby existing hotels to attract business. This will motivate your attendees to stay at the new hotel thereby resulting in attrition at the current headquarters hotel. Under these circumstances, it is unconscionable for the first hotel to hold the group responsible for attrition when it was not possible for either party to know prior to contracting that a new hotel would be planned and built. The hotel contract should address this possibility by allowing the group to reduce its block in advance without liability.

12. Provide Incentives for Exhibitors to make reservations in the official room block. Exhibitors are the only persons a meeting sponsor has any leverage with in terms of where they stay. The first thing a convention and trade show planner has to decide is if they want to require exhibitors to stay in the headquarters hotel, thereby guaranteeing that rooms will be picked up. Alternatively, some convention and trade show sponsors decide to require exhibitors not to stay in the headquarters hotel in order to allow regular attendees to stay there. Once it's decided where the exhibitors should stay, incentives to stay there can be used. Incentives can include discounts on booth fees as well as priority points for booth placement at future shows.

13. Have attendees prepay a nonrefundable package rate for the convention that includes attendance at the event and a hotel room. On the pro side, this strategy will make it mandatory for attendees to stay within the official block at contracted hotels thereby reducing attrition. On the con side, it may backfire in that some attendees will resent being told where they can stay and attendees will be motivated to make their reservations at the last minute when their plans are firm.

14. Include a provision that gives the meeting sponsor the right to assign some or all of its unused room block and meeting space to another group. Most hotel contracts have a boilerplate provision regarding restrictions on assignment of the contract. This provision generally says that neither party will assign any of its rights or obligations in the agreement, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the other party. On the surface, this is a reasonable term since both sides have a right to approve with whom they do business. With an uncertain economy, it may be time for meeting sponsors to rethink how this term is worded. It may be prudent to negotiate the right to assign the use of some or all of their unneeded guest rooms and meeting space to another group. Some hotels will object to this change because they would prefer to require attrition damages from the first group and book the second group as new business. This objection can be met if negotiated up front by requiring the replacement group to meet certain criteria before the first group is off the hook. In the alternative, assignment could still take place but having the first group guaranteeing the performance of the replacement group. There are many creative ways to look at this arrangement to make it workable for all sides.

15. Provide for a date change versus a cancellation. It sometimes happens that a meeting gets booked for specific dates and the meeting sponsor later discovers a date conflict with another group or event. If the meeting sponsor wants to move the meeting to alternate dates, most hotels would consider this a cancellation and rebooking. Most meeting sponsors would call it simply a date change that shouldn't require damages to be paid. There are many arguments that can be made by both sides to support their respective positions on this matter. As a compromise, the contract can state that if the date of the meeting is changed, and certain criteria are met, it will not be considered a cancellation and rebooking.

16. Create your own standard contract template. Many associations and companies have already gotten legal assistance in preparing a model contract template to send to hotels. This is no longer considered out of the ordinary. Although the side that put its terms on the table first has an initial advantage, the reality is that the final contract will be a compromise between what both sides want. Having your own contract template is still a good idea because it gives you clauses to suggest as an alternative to what the other side proposes.

CONCLUSION: Legal concepts and strategies in this industry have gotten too complex for most planners and hoteliers to act as their own counsel. If contracts and legalities are not your strong point, seek the assistance of an attorney familiar with this industry to advise you. The money you spend in the short run will potentially save you a lot more money in the future if your contract is not thorough and precise. ■

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► **Joey Greeno**
Kalahari Resort
Wisconsin Dells, WI

How long in the meetings industry?

15 years

How long in MPI?

I was an MPI Member of Chicago Chapter from 2001-2003. I recently joined the WI Chapter.

Tell a bit about your company and/or current position:

I am the Senior Sales Manager at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, WI. Home to a 100,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art, the authentically African-themed Kalahari Resort features America's largest indoor waterpark, 740 guestrooms, the 27-hole Trappers Turn golf course, the full-service Spa Kalahari and Salon, a fully equipped fitness center, on-site restaurants including Kahunaville, unique retail shops and a 15-screen cinema.

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with:

I am new to MPI-WI and am excited to be an active member.

Tell us about your family:

My fiancé Jamie and I live in Wisconsin Dells, WI with our four children, one dog, and two kittens.

Where were you born?

I was born in Waupun, WI, but grew-up in Randolph, WI.

Favorite Pastimes:

We love to take the kids to the area attractions, which include waterparks, beaches, shows, and more. I also enjoy watching sports, especially the Green Bay Packers and Milwaukee Brewers, and hunting.

Person you admire most and why:

My mother, Gloria. She has shown me perseverance by staying strong through trying times. My father, Tony. Tony isn't just my step dad, but he is my father. He was an amazing role model and has helped shape me into the man I am today.

Dream Vacation:

Australia, Hawaii, Italy.

If I won the lottery I would:

I would donate a large chunk to the UW Children's Hospital and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. I would pay my family's debts, buy my dream house and car, and take my dream vacations. Of course, I would spoil my four kids and give my fiancé, Jamie, the big, beautiful wedding she has always wanted.

Words to live by:

Live today as if it were your last, make sure the people you love know how you feel. Life is a gift and is not guaranteed to be there tomorrow.

Special personal accomplishments:

Having an amazing family.

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you?

I am a hard worker who goes above and beyond the call of duty in both my personal and professional life. ■

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September 20, 2007

MPI-Chapter Program
Radisson Hotel & Conference Center
Green Bay, WI

November 8, 2007

Fall Education Day
Chula Vista Resort
Wisconsin Dells, WI

October 11, 2007

MPI Chapter Program &
Community Outreach Book Drive
Lake Lawn Resort
Delavan, WI

December 6, 2007

MPI-Chapter Program
Holiday Event
InterContinental Hotel
Milwaukee, WI



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June Leadership Retreat Highlights

► **Susan Kainz**
The Delafield Hotel
Delafield, WI



Today's business climate requires us to demonstrate a return on investment when attending trainings, networking events, and when involved in professional organizations such as MPI. So then, how can we follow JFK's guidance on volunteerism and apply that to the additional involvement required as members of MPI WI Chapter's board, committees, or teams? This was one of the discussion topics at this year's Chapter Leadership Retreat held at the Chula Vista Resort on June 13th.

Led by Chapter President, Paulette Heney, CMM, the retreat provided interested chapter members the chance to learn about the many volunteer opportunities available to them. The timing of the conference was appropriate following the annual MPI Awards Gala where eleven individuals and two companies were recognized for their dedication and hard work in the Wisconsin Chapter.

Paulette referred back to 2002 when she was asked by Marge Anderson, then MPI WI Chapter President, to be education team lead. Other board members, including Michelle Eggert, CMP, commented on how their involvement began with participation on teams and committees. Michelle noted that her early involvement prepared her for roles on the Chapter's Board of Directors as VP of Member Care.

In an open forum, chapter members heard about the chapter's goals and objectives for the upcoming year. When asked, most attending felt ready to make a more significant impact and were

interested in the many varied opportunities available. Others had been active on a committee and were looking for a new role.

During the discussion, a change in strategy was suggested, which would require team leads to make a two-year commitment. It was explained that when planning educational and special events, there is a large learning curve on the first term, and the extended term would allow information to be passed along in a consistent manner. Other roles are available on teams and committees that do not require the same commitment.

Following the overview, the groups divided into individual areas of interest including finance, education, member care, and communications.

Here the groups learned specific roles and responsibilities for such committees as public relations, web site, raffle, partnership marketing, and teams including the holiday and golf events. Each group spent time brainstorming on new and creative ideas that could help draw in existing members as well as attract additional members to the chapter.

If you are interested in participating in one of the many volunteer opportunities, please contact Michelle Eggert, VP of Member Care at michelle_eggert@conferencedirect.com. ■

"Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

*Inaugural Address by John F. Kennedy -
January 20th 1961*



Taj Jordan, Dan Helgeson, and Steve Lorenz, CMP mingle at the break.



Dana Ecker and Alison Huber share ideas with their committee.



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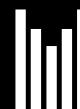
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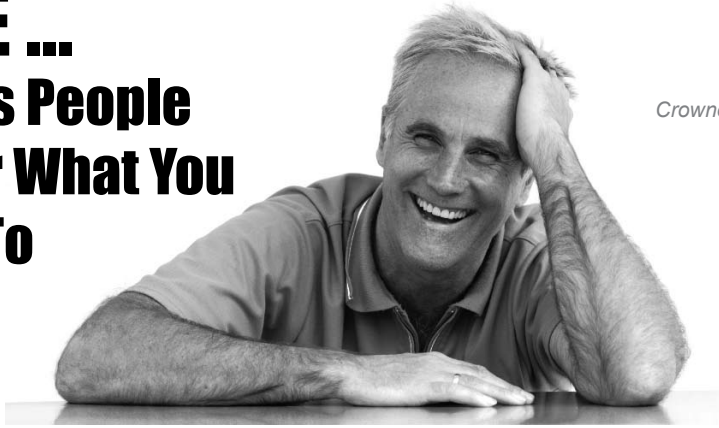
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SMILE ... It Makes People Wonder What You Are Up To



► **Lori A. Fuhrmann**
Crowne Plaza Milwaukee - Wauwatosa
Wauwatosa, WI



I find it very amusing to try to decipher a smile. Sometimes some smiles remind me of the ole' "cat that ate the canary" look and I think, ok ... what are they up to??? Others are just plain playful and mischievous, or show signs of kindness, friendship, honesty, respect, patience, and self-control.

Do you ever notice the innocent power of a child's smile? I don't care what anyone says, no matter what kind of day you are having, good or bad, a child's smile will always make you smile back and lift your heart.

I even notice that when I give our dog Elko a belly rub, her mouth angles up, just like a smile and she could not be more happy. Again, what a way to lift the spirits.

Pay attention to the different smiles around us. There is one called the "Pan American" smile. Think about the smile you use when getting your picture taken ... no feeling behind it. Then there is the one that cracks me up the most ... the insincere "professional smile." I can spot one of those a mile away. Then there is the "upside down" smile, commonly known as the "pout" (I am excellent at this if someone asks me to go camping.) A smile is a curve that helps set things straight.

Most of us, as meeting professionals, regularly attend networking events. What is the best way to walk into a crowded room by yourself? Simple: take something very important with you – a smile. Wearing a smile when you are among strangers is the best way to invite them to get to know you. A smile sends the message that you are friendly and easy to like. It shows that you have a positive outlook and it is the first thing people notice when they meet you. Have you ever been at a networking event and encountered people standing alone, looking like they just bit into a lime? Those are the ones I most like to approach in order to take them out of their pain. I approach with a smile, and can instantly see their relief and gratitude that I made the effort to make them feel welcome.

I want to share with you lyrics from the 2Pac song, "Power of a Smile" that I found quite moving:

*The power of a gun can kill, and the power of fire can burn
The power of wind can chill, and the power of mind can learn
The power of anger can raise inside until it tears you apart
But the power of a smile, especially yours, can heal a frozen heart*

Kindness is a special quality that generates tremendous power. It uplifts heavy hearts and brightens dark situations. You'll find that the best way to add richness to your own life is to be good to others. Start today, unleash the POWER OF YOUR SMILE! ■

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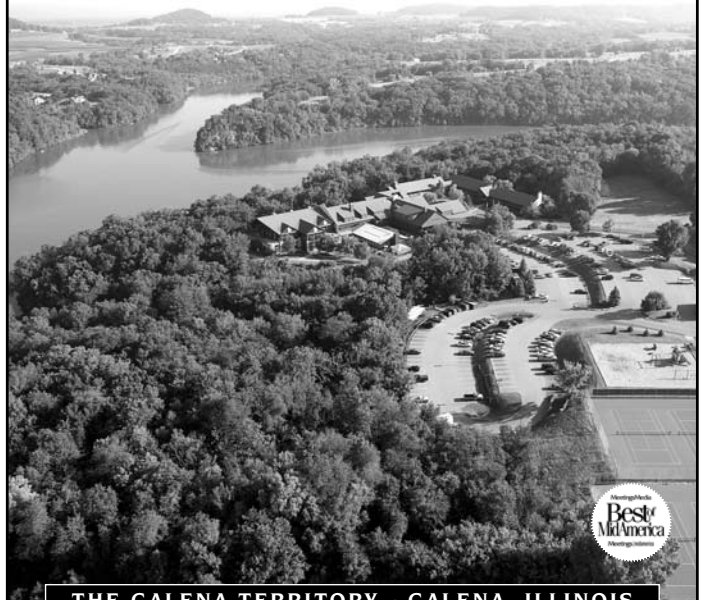
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Food for **THOUGHT**

Jill Prescott, cookbook author, host of the popular PBS cooking series *Jill Prescott's Ecole de Cuisine*, and founder of one of the first authentic French style cooking schools for home chefs in the United States, has recently joined The Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake, WI. Prescott, who has been residing, teaching and learning in California's Napa Valley area for the past two years, now brings her signature participation cooking courses to The Osthoff. "Participants will be immersed in the true quality and ambiance of a French culinary school. It will be accessible, yet faithful to the rich tradition of the craft," said Prescott. These courses are tailored for the recreational home chef or anyone interested in learning professional cooking skills for home use. For the corporate guest, she will be hosting interactive, customized culinary events and culinary team building courses.

Classically trained in French cuisine, Prescott has diplomas from the prestigious culinary schools of Paris. She has spent the last 20 years working hand-in-hand with artisans around the world to bring authenticity to her culinary programs. Single and multi-day courses are planned, spanning topics such as French cuisine and pastries, artisan breads, stocks, soups and sauces, organic cooking, and, of course, chocolate desserts.

Prescott founded her first *Ecole de Cuisine* in 1988 in Wisconsin, following her professional training in Paris. A total immersion culinary school patterned after her experiences at French cooking schools, it was considered one of the first intensive cooking schools designed for home chefs in the United States. She also hosted her own PBS cooking series and authored a companion cookbook of the same name. Prescott has hosted culinary events alongside beloved chefs Julia Child, Jacques Pepin, and many renowned French chefs, and was named one of the great women chefs in the book, *Women of Taste*. Most recently, she had been based in California, offering classes built around themes of wine and organic foods, while completing advanced wine studies at the Culinary Institute of America/Greystone in Napa Valley.

For more information on Ecole de Cuisine, log on to www.osthoff.com or call Barbara Antoine at 800-876-3399, ext. 830. ■

► **Chef Jill Prescott**
The Osthoff Resort
Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin



Carrot Ginger Soup

INGREDIENTS:

2-3 tablespoons grape seed oil
4 medium onions, chopped
3-inch chunk of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
6 cups vegetable stock
8 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
sea salt and freshly ground white pepper

Optional garnish; Heavy cream or crème fraîche. Place either one of the creams into a squirt bottle and decorate with swirls of cream and/or a few leaves of Italian parsley.

PROCEDURE:

1. Add oil to a heavy soup pot over medium heat. Add onions and cook until soft and translucent. You may need to add more oil if the onions stick. Do not allow them to brown.
2. Grate the ginger using a ginger grater or slice into thin slices. Add to the onions.
3. Add the stock and the carrots. Increase the heat until the mixture boils and then reduce it to a simmer for 20 minutes or until the carrots are tender.
4. Cool the soup. Run through a blender until very smooth. If soup is too thick it can be thinned with water. Season with salt (about 2 teaspoons) and 10-15 grinds white pepper.





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Meet Your 2007-2008 Education Team

The Education Team is brand-new this year, but each person brings a wealth of experience. We look forward to seeing you at the upcoming chapter programs!



VICE-PRESIDENT, EDUCATION

Susan Arts, CMP

*Account Manager
Meetings & Incentives in Caledonia*

Susan is a 19-year veteran of the meeting and event planning industry. Her experience has included planning events for corporations, associations and non-profit institutions. She spent five years at The American Club in Kohler

as a Conference Service Manager. After graduating from George Washington University she worked in both DC and New York City. She moved to Wisconsin in 1998.



DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROJECTS

David Helgeson, CMP

*Director of Conventions
Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton*

David has been in the industry for the past 16 years holding many different management positions. He received his CMP designation

in September 2003. In December 2004, he received his Associate Degree in Business from Cardinal Stritch University, and is currently finishing up his bachelors degree in Business Management. David has worked at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel for 12 years and as Director of Conventions, he is responsible for handling all of the conventions and large corporate meetings that occur at the property. He has been a member of MPI since 2002.



DIRECTOR OF MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Sherry Benzmiller

*Project Administrator and Meeting Planner
Energy Center of Wisconsin in Madison*

When Sherry joined the Center in 1998 she brought more than five years of experience in office administration. Sherry provides administrative support to the senior management team at the Energy Center and primary administrative

support to the Executive Director. Sherry provides all meeting planning activities for the Energy Center. The Energy Center holds 75 trainings per year across the Midwest and trains over 1500 residential and commercial and industrial customers per year.



DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Naomi Tucker, CMP

*Meeting & Event Planner
Humana in Green Bay*

Naomi comes from an extensive background of meeting planning experience. She has been in the meetings industry for over 10

years. The Meeting & Event Planning department at Humana, Inc. is responsible for planning and executing 2000 events per year. Naomi personally works on over 150 meetings per year, in addition to being actively involved with MPI. Previously, she has worked as a Supervisor of Meetings Services for Adelman Travel, as well as a Catering and Convention Services Manager with Hyatt Hotels, in Milwaukee.

What Do You **Want to Learn?**

It doesn't matter if you've been in the meetings industry for 16 years, 6 months, or somewhere in between; there's always something new on the scene to learn. What subjects have piqued your interest recently – registration websites, international meetings, negotiating contracts in a sellers market?

Your MPI-WI Education team has been hard at work over the summer developing programs that are of interest to you. Some of the upcoming programs include:

- *What's Hot in Hotel Contracts Now and What You Need to Know about It*
- *Leadership in the Changing World of Meeting Professionals*

We want to make sure we are offering education programs that are relevant to you and your work. In order to do so, we need your input.

If there are any topics you want to see covered in the coming year, please e-mail Susan Arts, CMP at sarts@meetings-incentives.com or call 262-835-6731.

The Key to Productivity: Appreciation

► **Gwen L. Seeboth**
Acuity Insurance
Sheboygan, WI



My company has been ranked in the top 5 Great Places to Work in the nation for the past four years, and my team and I are responsible for driving much of the fun. We have created some pretty large, wacky events, including "Urban Cowboy Day," complete with a mechanical bull riding contest and a free lunch. I have the luxury of working for an executive team who, in response to an inquiry about an indoor beach party, said, "Hey, why don't we crank the heat up in the building this February and have a huge party where people can have a free lunch and wear their shorts and Hawaiian shirts to work?"

Creating fun in a productive workplace environment is a careful balance that many event planners and their teams have to try to maintain day after day. The goal is to make employees feel valued and appreciated, but still have a lot of fun. But what do you do when the motivators become unmotivated?

Not too long ago, I knew I was in a serious staff crisis. I would leave planning meetings in total and absolute disbelief. The meetings were filled with childlike bickering and a lack of ownership of projects that stunned me. How could a team who was responsible for a major part of "workplace fun" be so miserable? I tried chocolate—Godiva no less, thinking that should get them grooving. Nothing. Team building events?

They resulted in a lot of "A-ha" moments, but weeks later it was back to more of the same negative attitude. Mini games with inexpensive prizes? Not a blip on their motivation scales.

I wanted so badly for my team to function in a healthy and productive manner that when my gifts and mini events did not work, I became resentful of the team. Didn't they appreciate my efforts?

My inspiration for a solution came from a hunk of cardboard with the word "Hurrah" scribbled on it that hangs on my office wall. It is one of the few things that grace my wall, but certainly the thing I treasure the most.

I thought back to the day when I walked into my office and saw a huge box containing the gift basket that I had been working on for weeks. I had left the basket on our CEO's desk the night before for him to go through and decide which items would stay and which items would go. What I had expected to find in the morning was a pile of items that he didn't like, that I would have to go out and replace. Instead, there was the box containing the gift basket with not one item removed. On each panel of this box, he had taken a highlighter and written words like "Hurrah," "Home Run," and "Excellent." Not one segment of

Continued on page 30

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2007 MPI-WEC à la Montreal

Creating Connections



► **Marie Johnson**
Midwest Airlines
Milwaukee, WI

Bonjour!

This year's theme of the 2007 MPI-WEC was 'Connect Yourself' and it certainly lived up to its expectation as thousands of industry professionals converged in Montreal, Canada on July 28-31 to network with their peers and colleagues, to learn from the brightest and the best, and above all, to be entertained and enlightened.

At the Opening General Session, we were welcomed by our MPI Chair 2007-2008, Angie Pfeifer. She shared that the MPI vision is activated by four strategies: Evolve from an association to a global community; Re-imagine the business relationship with chapters; Elevate member conversations and experiences; and Build a great organization. She asked us to "co-create an organization committed to our professional success within this rich global community that we'll build together."

Our MPI-WI Chapters members, 18 in attendance, were all the edge of our seats as we neared the awards portion of the program. And, I am very happy to report, we were not disappointed! Janet Sperstad, CMP was awarded International Planner of the Year and Marge Anderson on behalf of the Energy Center of Wisconsin was named the 2007 Global Paragon Winner. This is a tremendous recognition for these individuals as well as for our Wisconsin Chapter.

Our keynote speaker Don Tapscott, famed author of Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything, presented his vision on how Web 2.0, blogs, wikis, chat rooms and peer-to-peer networks are changing the way we connect and collaborate. All of us seasoned veterans in the audience learned that e-mail is "so yesterday." While that gave us pause for thought, he also shared cutting edge techniques to help us stay connected and collaborate in the future. The session ended with as much excitement as it began when Cirque du Soleil took the stage.

Over the course of the next three days, there were 100 different content experts and 125 educational sessions available for our MPI members. As you can imagine, it was impossible to attend all and difficult to choose between all the alternatives. So, new this year was Education on the Go where many of the sessions were recorded live and available post-conference in an MP3 format. This feature also supported the "green meetings" initiative by limiting the need for paper handouts.

MPI wants all our members to get the most out of their educational experience and they do a nice job of structuring the format so that you

can follow a particular track based on your interests and skill level. They not only offer novice, intermediate, and advanced sessions, but they take it a step further by developing select professional education tracks. For example, they offer sets of sessions aimed at Sales & Marketing, Small Business Owners, Strategic Meetings Management and Senior Meeting Professionals.

Or, if you are like me, you can shake it up and get a little taste of each. Within the sales and marketing track, I attended a session presented by Karen Purves entitled, "Communicate with Strength: 19 Words that Undermine Your Effectiveness in Sales and Marketing." A few of the obvious choices are words such as "can't" and "problem." A not so obvious choice is the word "why." Supposedly, it can create defensiveness. Try it on for size. Assume you have an employee that is chronically tardy. You can ask him/her "why are you coming in late

everyday?" Or you could rephrase it and say "what is the reason for your tardiness?" They will be much more responsive with the latter.

She saved the best for last and indicated that by changing one word in her email communication that she has dramatically increased her response rate. Instead of closing an email by writing "I look forward to talking to you on Friday," she now says "I look forward to talking with you on Friday." It has made an immeasurable difference.

Another benefit of the MPI-WEC was that it brought together planners and suppliers at the Meeting Place Trade Show. In the past, this was a one-day event, however, because of the increasing number of suppliers and the interest of planners to cover more ground – they offered a two-day program this year.

So, it is now the last day of the conference and they have two more stops to pull out – the 2008 World Education Congress Promotional Lunch and the Closing Reception. The lunch was sponsored by next year's host city, Las Vegas! They did a phenomenal job with the theme, staging, dining experience, and entertainment. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority combined a legendary stand-up comedian, George Wallace, with the hottest, most talented all-male vocal group, Mosaic.

That evening, we all bid each other farewell at the Closing Reception in the Old Port of Montreal. True to its rich history and diverse culture, Montreal left us with an experience to remember. I hope to see all you in "Viva Las Vegas" next year for the 2008 MPI-WEC. ■



Steve Lorenz, CMP, Marie Johnson, and Janet Sperstad, CMP pause for a quick photo on their way to the closing reception.

MPI-WI Leaders

Win Prestigious International Awards

2007 GLOBAL PARAGON AWARD WINNER

The Energy Center of Wisconsin, represented in Montreal by Marge Anderson and Andrea Minniear, was honored with MPI's most prestigious award, The Global Paragon Award. This is the only MPI award that recognizes what an individual meeting can contribute to business success – or in the case at the Energy Center of Wisconsin – to the success of a mission.

This year's winning Global Paragon entry was so extraordinary that the judges determined that only one overall winner would be selected for 2007. The judges praised the event for balancing the execution of lofty ideals and sound Level 5 ROI measurement. The Energy Center of Wisconsin has produced the Better Buildings, Better Business Conference – aka "B4" – for five years. It serves as the conference for the regional high-performance home building community who are interested in improving the energy performance of homes. The two day event is designed with a strong emphasis on educational programming in cold-climate energy-efficient home construction techniques and technologies.

This is a story about a conference that almost didn't happen. For years B4's funding came primarily from two sources, both committed to the cause, but neither had any background in event marketing so tradeshow and sponsorships were not considered essential to the conference. As the conference continued to grow, the legacy funders experienced funding cuts and passed those cuts to the conference. Funding dropped from 85% to 13% of event revenue.

Largely because of ROI results, the Energy Center Board concluded that the conference would go forward in 2007 as a make-or-break year. Any decrease in financial performance would mean the end of the conference.

Presented with a make-or-break survival challenge and aggressive revenue and expense goals, the Energy Center's team reduced the cost of the meeting to lower than it had been in its history and generated a 14% overall increase in revenue. All while saving the integrity of the conference and meeting or exceeding goals and achieving its highest ever overall evaluation score!

Inspired by the conference, the host hotel, Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, has added solar energy to their environmental commitment.

The conference illustrates how MPI makes its members successful through two of its key initiatives, ROI and Blue Ocean Strategy.

2007 INTERNATIONAL PLANNER OF THE YEAR

Janet Sperstad, CMP, lead instructor for the Meeting and Event Management Degree Program at Madison Area Technical College (MATC) in Madison, Wisconsin, was honored with this year's International Planner of the Year Award. A 20-year MPI member, Sperstad has devoted much of her life to the development and success of the meetings industry. She has held the role of MPI Wisconsin Chapter President and has served on dozens of committees for the MPI Wisconsin chapter and MPI International.

While serving as a committee member on the MPI International Professional Development Strategy Group, Sperstad helped to develop a program to define the extensive body of knowledge in meeting planning, the first of its kind in the history of the profession. She has received numerous awards and recognition from her Wisconsin chapter, including being inducted into their Hall of Fame for lifetime achievement. Known for her passionate dedication to education, Sperstad helped create and develop the nation's first and only associate degree program for Meeting and Event Management. She has written for and been featured in a variety of industry publications and has spoken at numerous industry events. ■



Janet Sperstad, CMP and Marge Anderson (representing the Energy Center of WI) are recognized for their extraordinary contribution to the meetings industry.

Community Engagement: Creating Meetings & Events That Make an Impact

► **Marlena Deutsch**
United Way of Dane County
Madison, WI



Do you know what will make your meeting or event memorable for your attendees? Stunning centerpieces, the linens, and the location all play a role, but bringing a new, targeted focus of community engagement to your meetings and events will be more impactful and give you a greater return on your investment than traditional methods currently used in the field.

Community engagement is asking your attendees to become engaged in the work of your organization through simple surveys, group work, question and answer sessions, and other techniques. The purpose is two-fold: 1) to educate the community, and, 2) to receive feedback on how to do the work that the community says is important. Community engagement helps you connect to the opinions and feelings of your audience by asking them what really matters in their lives. You get answers for your problems, and the attendees get invested in outcomes. They leave wanting to help you, help your organization, and by extension, help the community.

United Way of Dane County, a nationally leading non-profit, knows that this works. Several years ago we were challenged by our donors to change the way we do business. We started by asking our community what mattered most to them. By hosting town halls, individual donor meetings, conducting research, and really listening, we developed our community's Agenda for Change, including seven areas the community told us matter most to them.

Our work didn't stop there. Last year we launched a huge initiative by creating the Latino Advisory Delegation, a group of 28 community and institutional leaders that examined the issues and concerns of the growing Latino population in Dane County. The group produced a report and event launch called *Cuéntame: Latino Life in Dane County*, culled from research conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, informational call-in shows on Spanish-language radio station La Movida, and engagement sessions that drew 50-200 community members who told us their most pressing concerns for their future. The results mirrored the Agenda for Change, which showed us that United Way remains on target for answering to the community. The work of the Latino Advisory Delegation is not over. This year we will hold a

one-year anniversary to evaluate the outcomes and measures of our innovative report and work.

"United Way is a volunteer and community-led organization," says Erika Monroe-Kane, Director of Communications and Community Engagement for United Way of Dane County. "Because we see

our events as an opportunity to create a dialogue with people, we include elements of community engagement in all of our events. Our focus on this helps us better listen to and understand the community."

Deedra Atkinson, Senior Vice President of Community Impact for United Way of Dane County agrees. "Our relationship with volunteers, donors, and the larger Dane County community has changed for the better. We can specifically link these results to our increased attention on engaging the community."

Our work with community engagement has expanded to all of our events. For example, at our Campaign Celebration last November, 800 people from across Dane County came together to celebrate the successes of the 2006 campaign, and we held an informal community engagement survey over lunch. Each table had a professionally printed survey and pen, asking people what areas of the Agenda for Change they were most concerned with, from access to independence for seniors to early childhood education and health care. Prior to the event we created a template of all the possible responses. We were able to report back before the program

was over by projecting the answers on-screen. The results were also posted on our website. The big-picture result? We had instant feedback that the engagement worked. Eight hundred attendees quickly got involved and invested in our work.

Think about ways you can to engage your attendees and consider adding even small elements of community engagement to your program. When flawlessly executed, you will see smiles, connections, and a deeper understanding of your organization's work. You too will better understand the needs and wants of your attendees, and will be better able to address them in the future.

"This has revolutionized our connection to the community," says Atkinson. "This is not just business for us, but the lifeblood of our organization." ■



Photo by Gretchen Miller

Community Engagement at United Way's Campaign Celebration.

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Planner Profile:

Reggie Driscoll

▶ **Reggie Driscoll**
Meeting Planner
State Bar of Wisconsin
Madison, WI



How long in the meetings industry?

7 years

How long in MPI?

2 years as a student and recently re-joined

Family:

Single, five brothers and sisters all within a couple miles.

Where were you born?

Fairfax, VA, just outside of Washington D.C.

Where do you currently live?

Madison, WI

Favorite pastimes:

Bicycling, reading, spending time with my family.

Favorite musical group:

Josh Grobin

Person you admire most and why:

Lance Armstrong. I admire the way he bounced back after battling cancer. I am inspired by the way he has built up his foundation to help others with cancer. Also, Janet Sperstad for her work with the MATC Meeting and Event management program. She has helped so many people in this industry with her knowledge, experience, and being a Mentor.

Dream vacation:

Bicycling through Europe

If I won the lottery I would:

Finally be able to afford a condo downtown.

Words to live by:

"Life's journey is not to arrive at the grave safely in a well preserved body but rather to skid in sideways, totally worn out, shouting holy crap-what a ride." From a co-worker's retirement party.

Special personal accomplishments:

Returning to school in my late 30's to get a degree before I turned 40.

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you?

I spend a lot of my spare time volunteering with the Madison School and Community Recreation disabled ski program and for Easter Seals of Wisconsin. ■

Staying Power

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*Madison Magazine 2007 Reader Poll

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New Fox Valley Program: Meeting and Event Management

We've all heard the saying, "It chose me, I didn't choose it," in reference to the meetings industry. There is now a new opportunity for future planners to "choose it." Beginning this fall, Fox Valley Technical College is offering a two-year Associate Degree Program in Meeting and Event Management. This will be a great addition to Madison Area Technical College's two-year Associate Degree and the certificate program at Waukesha Technical College.

This new program offers training that is in high demand in North Central Wisconsin, focusing specifically on teaching students how to plan, conduct, and promote meetings and events. The program offers organizations the chance to hire trained professionals directly into their meeting planning positions, instead of on-the-job training that is time consuming and does not guarantee that accurate professional knowledge is being shared.

Students of the program will learn basic competencies including:

- Meeting and Event Marketing
- Risk Management, Negotiations, and Legal Issues
- Hospitality Law & Liability
- Transportation, Registration, and Housing
- Tourism: A Community Approach
- Professionalism, Ethics and Etiquette

Along with teaching students these basic competencies, the program is designed to support individuals seeking the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation. With knowledgeable, professional instructors from our very own membership, programs like this are exactly what we need to ensure that the future of the meetings industry will continue to grow and become a choice for future leaders.

How does this new program affect me? As a former student member turned planner member, I can tell you that students need the support of the chapter and its members. When you see these students at monthly meetings, take a moment to introduce yourself, have lunch with them and learn why they are choosing this profession. Our students are full of excitement for the industry, as are the great members of the Wisconsin Chapter. When students hear experiences and passion for the industry coming from their future colleagues, they are far more likely to remain in the field and to become active MPI members.

The program at Fox Valley Tech is a great addition to our chapter's drive to recruit and retain more student members. It also aligns with MPI's vision of building student membership and making MPI the professional home as our students become professionals in the industry.

More information about the program is available by contacting Mary Kay Schlaver at (920) 735-2429 or at schlaver@fvtc.edu. ■

▶ Alison Huber
State Bar of Wisconsin
Madison, WI



About Fox Valley Technical College

FVTC began providing workforce development training in 1912 and is the third largest district in the state in student enrollment and equalized valuation. It serves approximately 50,000 people annually and approximately 1,500 career program students graduate each year. It offers over 80 associate degree and technical diploma programs, nearly 120 specialized certificates, and related instruction to 21 apprentice trades. The college serves a five-county area: Winnebago, Outagamie, Waupaca, Waushara, and Calumet.



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Defining Success with Service

► Michelle Eggert, CMP
ConferenceDirect
Big Bend, WI



In mid-July, the chapter leaders of MPI received an email from Elaine M. Jastram Conrad, CAE, Vice President, Membership and Chapter Business Management, Meeting Professionals International that got me thinking. The question posed was, "What does chapter success look like?"

There were a variety of answers suggested by Elaine including "serving in a global community in the areas of communication, engagement, and leadership." But what does chapter success look like to me? Or does it need to be even more personal by answering the question – how would I define *my* success in the MPI Wisconsin Chapter?

We all know that it's an extremely busy time in the meeting planning industry. It appears as if we are all managing our time as closely as possible, scurrying from task to task, trying to keep track of what needs to be accomplished on a daily, if not hourly, basis. Travel, meetings, and hotel occupancies are up in our industry, which is a wonderful thing. Time and task management is now extremely important. In addition to my responsibilities to my clients and my family, defining success in MPI needs to be a priority, and I make sure it has a "place" on my list of daily tasks.

I began the search to try to determine how I define my success in the MPI Wisconsin Chapter. I started with the positive impact I hope I had made with my peers and for the organization. Serving on the board of directors has given me an incredible opportunity to learn how to handle situations professionally, ethically, and fairly. There are times during meetings or trade shows that I sit back and think to myself, "Now why didn't I think of that?" or "What a great idea!" In return, I hope other individuals have

learned and grown in their response to situations, based on my behavior, actions and comments. At a minimum, maybe I can hope to have shown them what not to do or say.

A second way I can define my success in the MPI Wisconsin Chapter is in the number of additional opportunities, both through business and volunteering, that are made available to me. I have had the incredible opportunity to grow my business contacts through my involvement with MPI. I have also been fortunate to be contacted by various MPI members to serve on additional committees outside of MPI, both in the non-profit and business arenas.

These are just two brief examples how I define my success in the MPI Wisconsin Chapter. Here is my challenge to you. Take 15 minutes out of your day today to answer the question, "How do you define your success in the MPI Wisconsin Chapter?" Make a list of items that you can utilize to measure your success. I guarantee that your success will be directly impacted on how involved you are within the organization. There are numerous volunteer opportunities on each of the committees. Call or email me to brainstorm where your talents might best be used.

To quote Elaine once again, "Now is the time to participate and personally be involved to begin

to re-imagine the future of what the business relationship with chapters will look like."

Take the challenge, get involved and define your success in the chapter!

Michelle Eggert, CMP can be reached at 262-853-7171 or michelle_eggert@conferencedirect.com. ■



“Taking Care of Business” at the MPI-WI November Education Day

► David Helgeson, CMP
Radisson Paper Valley Hotel
Appleton, WI



After reading the title many of you may have starting singing to yourselves! The November education team came up with the title the same way. Part of the MPI culture is to buy MPI. The November team decided this would be the best opportunity to capture the audience and “take care of business.”

The November MPI Wisconsin Chapter’s Fall Education day will be held on Thursday, November 8, 2007 at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. The day will start will breakouts covering various topics of interest, including AV 101 and site inspections. After the morning session, MPI-Wisconsin Chapter will offer its **only** tradeshow of the year. Following with theme, “Taking Care of Business,” your challenge as a planner will be to bring an RFP to a MPI supplier member and bring in a non-member guest. The challenges for the supplier are twofold: 1. Create the best possible booth with creative décor and exciting marketing, and 2. Bring a non-member planner to the function so they can experience the power of MPI in Wisconsin.

The education will wrap up with a dynamic keynote by Tom Jadin. For thirty years Mr. Jadin was on staff at Wisconsin’s Winnebago Mental Health Institute where he held a variety of clinical, supervisory, and

administrative positions. Currently Tom operates a private counseling service for individuals and families and is a part-time instructor for the University of Wisconsin. Mr. Jadin is also an internationally recognized speaker, trainer, and consultant for private corporations and public agencies throughout the United States and Canada. He has published and presented over 30 papers and has 10 films to his credit. Mr. Jadin will provide a funny and unique way to “Reach New Heights without Climbing the Walls!”

The fall education team is led by Marin Medema from the Osthoff Resort. When talking with Marin about her team, she commented, “It’s been terrific having 90% of the same team together for four years now. The team just seems to click and everyone has their thing that they do best and they just do it! It makes being a Team Chair a dream and a lot of fun. It’s a great team and I expect another great event in 2007!”

The November Education event promises to provide wealth of information and opportunity. There will be plenty of chances to network with fellow industry professionals. The November Education team looks forward to seeing you there while you are “Taking Care of Business” and buying MPI. ■

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New Members

We'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our new members.

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Madison, WI 53719
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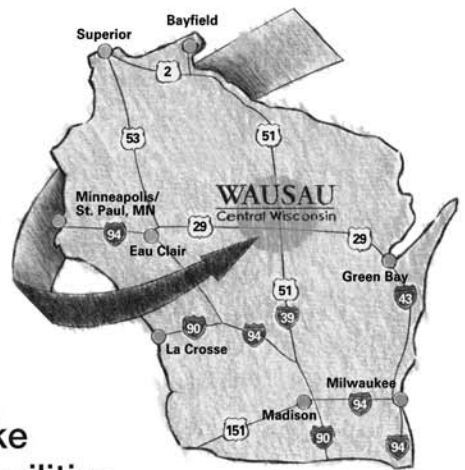
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Continued from page 19: **The Key to Productivity**

that box was lacking a word of praise. I kept the box in its entirety in my office for weeks. When I finally did remove it, I took a box cutter and cut off just one word—"Hurrah" and hung it on my wall where I look at it often.

It was this piece of cardboard that made me realize I was working too big with my team. I needed to step back and work smaller.

I took a hard look at how I was performing. Overextended as we all are these days, I had become so focused on the bigger and better of events that I had forgotten about the little things. I started simply. Instead of rushing from one task to the next in meetings, I took the time to really stop and single people out when they did something good; not to instruct them on what to do next, but just to tell them, "WOW, that is a fantastic idea!"

Soon the rest of the team began to respond. I found them all stopping more to point out the positives and working together to rework the negatives. I was encouraged.

I then stopped "assigning" projects and instead encouraged people to take on a project by indicating that I really thought this would be a good fit for them and why. Not only did they step up with chest puffed out with pride, but they more confidently began to take some risks that usually enhanced the project. Others started stepping up to the plate to take on more projects—eager to be a part of the project teams that were having so much success.

I started returning project revisions with, at the very minimum, some sort of positive word across the top and throwing in the occasional piece of chocolate.

Rewards became more appreciated and less expected. Laughter returned to our weekly meetings and planning became more fun again. Yes, it is good when you can do something grand. But sometimes the most valuable thing you can do is to take a minute and put your highlighter to a cardboard box. ■

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► **Sara Clauder**
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MPI-WI Community Outreach
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BOOK DRIVE

One way to get the most out of your membership is to get involved. You are able to meet many fellow MPI members and feel good about it.

The Community Outreach Committee participates in three programs each year by working with various organizations throughout the state. After a program is selected, MPI members donate items for that specific program.

The purpose of the Community Outreach Committee is to give back to the community. For example, last year in Racine, the program benefited a homeless shelter (HALO). MPI members were very generous from across the state and we collected a table full of items.

"The Community Outreach team is instrumental in identifying organizations in need, and working with them on fulfilling items on their "wish list," says Susan Arts, CMP, Vice President of Education. "It's another way that our chapter members stay involved in the communities around the state." To kick off 2007-2008, the first community outreach program we will be doing is a book drive. This program will take place in October at Lake Lawn Resort in Delavan. You can make a difference by donating both new and used books.

If a meeting is coming to a town near you or if you would like to volunteer on the Community Outreach Committee, please contact Sara Clauder at 608-221-6176 or sara.clauder@wpsic.com. Any ideas on future programs are much appreciated! ■



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Datebook: Calendar of Events

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OCTOBER 2007

11 Chapter Meeting

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Delavan, WI
www.mpiwi.org

28 — November 1

MPI Institutes 2007
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www.mpiweb.org

NOVEMBER 2007

8 Fall Education Day

Chula Vista Resort
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