



MICHIGAN
CHAPTER

September, 2019 Newsletter

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Welcome New Members



This month we'd like to welcome Caitlin Gallagher and Marcus Johnson to our membership. Hope to see you at a meeting soon!

Ask a CMP!



Member Spotlight



Meet **Fran Brown, Senior Sales Manager** at Kalahari Resorts and Convention Centers. She is a 32 year veteran of the hospitality industry, bringing experience and knowledge to her position. She loves being a part of the Kalahari Resorts and Convention Centers team in Ohio. "Working in the Meeting Industry can be both physically and mentally demanding. It requires a lot of communication between customers, staff and management, and without it, the whole ship can sink." Fran enjoys the challenges of her job, and being a part of "one of the Midwest's premier convention, meeting, and entertainment destinations". If she could have a super power to help her at work, it would be: "The ability to read people's mind or be in two places at one time, both would save a lot of time and make life easier."

Thanks for your membership, Fran!

What you Need to Know

This month, we spoke to **MPI MI member Kathy Palmer, CMP.**

Question: *What is the biggest challenge you face when planning meetings of various sizes?*

Answer:

For me it is the food and beverage (F&B) minimums that are required by the hotels.

Not only do hotels provide a required flat dollar amount but they also charge a service fee and local taxes on top. A \$10,000 F&B budget quickly becomes a \$13,000 expense after calculating the "plus plus" number. We have seen service fees of up to 25%!

With this big impact item, how do you stay within a budget? For my clients, I track the counts for every meal event on a spreadsheet. When I'm finalizing the guarantee, I work off of attendance averages. For one client, I averaged that 65% of people come to breakfast on the second day of a conference but only 50% come the third day. Using this type of historical data allows me to provide more accurate estimates to the hotels in advance of the event.

Another significant impact on the attendees at meals is the location of the event – resorts tend to have higher meal attendance as delegates cannot leave for meals as quickly as they could in a downtown area. Making notes about the accessibility of other local restaurants will also help determine a better attendance estimate. I recommend including these notes on your spreadsheet.

Start tracking your meals. If you can't get the counts, ask the hotel; they know how many people they served so that they can charge you. With a few years data to back up your estimates, you'll be providing accurate F&B counts in no time at all!

Pick of the Gallery



MPI Michigan is going to be offering for the first time an informational conference call titled "**Membership 101**". This will be a 30 minute conference call on Monday, October 7 at 11am and will answer all your membership questions, such as how to engage with other members, how to set up your profile at the website, how to get the most out of your membership, etc. [Click here](#) to join the call on October 7; we recommend signing on 5 minutes early!

Just Around The Corner



There is still time to register for our upcoming (first meeting of the year!) Signature Series event **September 19** at The DoubleTree in Bay City! A very important part of this meeting is our **Meeting Giveback**. Anyone attending this event is encouraged to bring items to donate to the CAN Council of Great Lakes Bay Lakes Region, which provides support to children and families affected by child abuse. Items to bring include toiletries, new/gently used baby/kids clothes, etc. [Click here](#) for more info and to register!

Conversations with Members



We spoke to MPI MI member Kara Zimmer (Inn at St. John's) for her thoughts on being an active member of the MPI MI Chapter: "I joined MPI Michigan Chapter in 2014. At the beginning, I primarily attended meetings for the educational opportunities but as time went on, I found out that MPI Michigan Chapter had so much more to offer. I have enjoyed the networking opportunities and on a personal level, I have developed friendships that I know will last throughout my career. For the past 2 years, I have been a member of the MPI MI Chapter communications committee which has also



Having fun at Trivia Night -
April 2019

provided an additional stepping stone to learn from fellow members and build solid relationships."

Thank you Kara!

Did you know that as a member of MPI you are eligible to apply for a variety of grants and scholarships?

To learn more, please visit:

www.mpiweb.org/about/foundation/scholarships

or contact Karalee McKinstry, VP of Membership at kmckinstry@graduateannarbor.com.

Thank you!

Questions? info@mpimichapter.org

Website: <https://www.mpiweb.org/michigan>

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