

the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter

Social Issues Affecting the Meeting Industry

On a recent trip to Chicago, I came across an article about a generous woman who was doing something to help those left out in the cold, literally, during the Polar Vortex. When police confiscated propane tanks from a homeless encampment after one exploded, a good Samaritan took it upon herself to house 70 homeless people in nearby hotels for the week.

Meeting planners sometimes face a surplus of rooms left in the block, otherwise known as attrition. Instead of paying the hotel for these unused rooms, what if you offered the unused rooms to a group in need? As Joe D'Alessandro, president and CEO of San Francisco Travel, said recently at Convening Leaders, "...These people in the streets are human beings, and I encourage you to look them in the eye when you walk by."

Another pressing matter in our society today is human trafficking; planners and suppliers can play a part in eradicating this crime. As a sign of their support, the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) recently signed the anti-trafficking group ECPAT-USA's Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism. ECPAT-USA offers company-wide education programs and information for organizations who want to help.

Arne Sorenson, president and CEO, Marriott, recently announced they have made the decision to make human trafficking awareness training mandatory for all on-property associates. Marriott also shared their training materials with the American Hotel & Lodging Association and have made it available for free to educators of hotel management students.

The free app TraffickCam enables users to help combat sex trafficking by uploading photos of their hotel rooms. Traffickers regularly post photographs of their victims posed in hotel rooms for online advertisements. These photographs are evidence that can be used to find and prosecute the

perpetrators of these crimes if investigators can determine where the photos were taken. Those in the meeting industry should encourage their members to contribute to apps like these.

Here are a few additional ideas addressing current matters that are easy to implement at your next meeting:

- Work with your venue to post flyers that offer help to trafficked victims in areas where victims might be alone, such as a bathroom stall.
- Ask your venue what, if any, training their staff has undergone to identify signs of human trafficking. Certain bars will advertise "safe words" that you can pass on to the bartender if you are in need of help. These are usually posted in bathrooms.
- Activate your Board to get involved in pre/post show community service projects similar to PCMA's Hospitality Helping Hands.
- Work with your caterer to ensure that excess food is donated to local shelters or those in need.
- Many groups are opting to save money by buying and assembling furniture (e.g. chairs for your keynote stage) rather than renting. Consider donating the furniture post-show to a local organization that can put it to good use. A Wider Circle is a local charity in D.C. accepting such donations!

Brooke Hirsch

Senior Manager, CTA Events and Conferences

Edward Bagsic, CMP

Manager, Conventions, VIP Events and Budgets

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Mission: The mission of PCMA and the Chapter is to be the leading organization for meeting and event professionals by delivering superior and innovative education and promoting the value of professional convention management.

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CAPITAL CHAPTER:

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If you have any comments, suggestions or would like to write an article for *The Chatter*, email: pcma.capital.comm@gmail.com

If you have ideas for future Chatter Issues, please send them to pcma.capital.comm@gmail.com - we are also

accepting articles for our library to be used for future issues, if you would like to write something, send an email for article guidelines.



message from the board



I WISH I KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW!

Mary Kreins

Board of Directors, Education Pillar

Have you ever said those words to yourself? Have you thought back on your career and defined it like something you'd find in an amusement park? Was it a slow steady crawl of a roller coaster and then a sudden whoosh of twists and turns? Were there times when it felt like a gentle boat following a glided path on the water? However you got from there to here, you probably didn't do it alone. Someone guided you, mentored you and lifted you up during your journey in your early years.

The PCMA Capital Chapter's Emerging Professionals Committee (EPC) is LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN AND WOMEN - to serve on the MENTORSHIP program as mentors. You may be thinking...I don't have time, I'm too busy, I don't have much to offer. But it takes less time than you think, and the rewards are greater than you can imagine and this is a great way to give back, or volunteer on a smaller scale. Think about what you know now, that you wish someone had shared back then, and the impact you can make on a mentee.

Likewise, are you trying to figure out the twists and turns of the hospitality industry? Unsure about the direction to take or decisions to make? No matter where you are at the beginning of your journey, do not miss the opportunity to take advantage of knowledge from those who have been on the same road.

For those entering our industry today, the EPC Committee is here for YOU. The committee is dedicated to the delivery of superior and innovative education and professional development opportunities to students and professionals with 0-5 years of experience. The EPC provides a robust mentoring program where like-minded industry professionals join together one-on-one and make a difference. These connections provide mentees increased confidence, knowledge and interpersonal growth while giving mentors an opportunity to share their journey. The end result: building the Capital Chapter meeting planning community, YOUR COMMUNITY!

The EPC also coordinates our OUTREACH program visiting local universities and high schools. About 7-10 times a year, we bring industry panels into live classroom discussions to engage with the next generation of students who have an interest in pursuing a career in our industry. We are always looking for professionals to share their stories and speak about PCMA.

So is it your turn to give back or get involved? Please join us as a mentor, speaking at an outreach event or as an active mentee participant! We look forward to your involvement.



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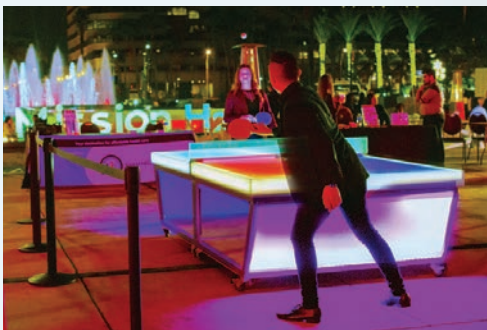
From the readers of *Successful Meetings* and *M&C*

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What Does Your Job Entail? Industry Insiders

In our current economy meetings are an ever-growing industry; whether trade shows, business meetings, incentives or medical meetings there are a multitude of people working to get the job done. With the variety of industries/organizations hosting meetings, there are also a variety of meeting professionals. Some went to school to learn about the industry and others, like me, happened to “fall” into it and find themselves in an unexpected career path.

The idea that there are people with different titles and direction in our industry begs the question: what is your job and how do you incorporate what you and others within your industry/organization do to secure a successful meeting.

MY STORY

I am a meetings manager in a trade association and do not work in a meetings department. While my title is Meeting Manager, I actually work in the membership department and am responsible for working to make sure business meetings and one trade show bi-yearly are moving in the right direction.

My position handles everything from where our next meeting should go to sourcing, site visits, a final recommendation to our decision makers and securing the contract. Additionally, I am responsible for the agenda, securing suggested speakers, budget, marketing and contract on-site staffing for our programs.

The membership for our two annual meetings is mainly comprised of farmers from the mid-west and our bi-yearly trade show consists of more than 200 international attendees representing over 35 countries. Each meeting has a unique component and different expectation/experience.

Due to the size of our programs, my time-line is shorter than some and six months before the meeting I begin to work with the local CVB to secure optional tours and a large offsite event.

While my role is a one-man show, I know there are meeting planners involved with large teams, some who have the same role as myself and others who have

meetings as a component to many additional responsibilities. As a member of the PCMA Capital Chapter, I would enjoy the opportunity to connect with all the different positions in our “world” and look forward to learning what YOUR job entails.

If you are interested in sharing with our members, please send an email to pcma.capital.comm@gmail.com I look forward to featuring you in a future story!

Rebecca Kane
Meetings Manager, U.S. Grains Council



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As Seen on PCMA Catalyst

As we turn our focus to spring and warmer weather, meeting professional positions are starting to pop up like daffodils. Be sure to check Catalyst for posts about both temporary and permanent positions, including: Meetings Assistant, Meeting Planner contract work, and event management research.

On a similar note, Jasmine Zhu, Associated Editor for PCMA Convene writes about staffing shortages. Hotel and hospitality sources report that it's become increasingly harder to hire and retain staff. Please help Convene measure the effect on the meetings industry by taking part in the following short survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RXHZ5FH>

For those in the association world, spring may be a good time to begin your Request for Proposal (RFP) process for contracted services, particularly if your annual meeting is in the next few months. This timing provides a good-sized window for the review and decision-making process, as well as time for potential vendors to attend and observe your show. Feel free to post on Catalyst to ask for advice for devising your RFP – many industry colleagues are willing to share their documents and processes.

Recently, Mrs. Renee P. Shipe, CMP, Manager, Meetings & Conference Registration for NACHA in Herndon, VA posted looking for advice for planning her organization's 50th anniversary. Several bits of advice came in from meeting professional colleagues whose organizations were celebrating milestones, including the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' 25th anniversary, the National Council for Behavioral Health's 50th anniversary, and the Economic Club of Washington D.C.'s 10th anniversary. Check Catalyst if you are looking for ideas for milestone celebrations.

Elizabeth Kretchmer, of Strategic Meeting Manager, LLC is looking for speakers on the following topics: Emerging Technology and Data Privacy, How Artificial Intelligence (AI) Affects the Industry/Adopting AI, Understanding the

Power of Diversity & Inclusion. Help Elizabeth by visiting her thread and offering your advice. Or trade Speaker Bureau and Booking Agency success stories for greater impact.

Julie Ho from the Project Management Institute seeks help with an exhibit hall cancellation policy. Julie states, "I am interested to see how groups handle the process. For instance, if signing up at the current show, how long after signing for the next year event do you require a deposit?" Nann Philips, Owner of Scurry Street Meeting Management, provides information on deposits, timing, and signing up for the following year's event. Read more on Catalyst!

When trying to decide whether to live stream your event, what factors do you consider? Expense? Impact of streaming on the number of attendees for your live vent? The time it takes to edit video on the fly? Peter Bordes, VP, Events & Sales at CoinDesk wants to know! James Parker, President of Digitell, Inc. in Jamestown NY shared some ideas that work for his organization, including advice on what sessions to stream, how to reduce costs, and what to charge. "I have a wealth of data and information if you're interested. Please feel free to reach out at your convenience," shared James. What else do you have to share with Peter?

And finally, Joan Eisenstodt posted a link to the 2019 US Travel and Hospitality Outlook, which proves to be an interesting read. "It's interesting to see what is said from various outlook reports for the industry," stated Eisenstodt.

Catalyst continues to be a great resource for information and collaboration. Check out the latest posts or make a post of your own.

Tracy Blithe
CMP, Manager Meeting Operations
Heart Rhythm Society

“

Help PCMA Convene measure the effect of staffing shortages by taking part in a short survey
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”



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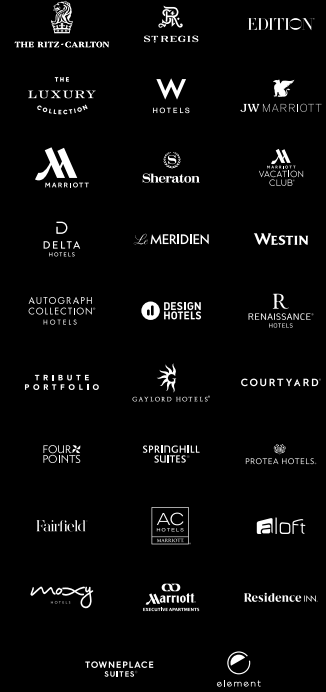
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Supplier Hosted Events

What Makes Planners Click “YES, I Will Attend”?

KRISTEN'S QUESTION

One of the largest investments suppliers make each year are in-market client events. The ultimate goal in hosting these events is to engage with clients and build a relationship while also keeping the destination front of mind. Just as important, is to introduce you to partners, who are very often heavily supporting the financial sponsorship of these events.

Finding fresh, new ways to accomplish this each year can be a challenge. Professional suppliers all know planners are inundated with invitations and that they are competing for a precious and limited resource – your time!

We've seen a wide range of events designed to capture planners' attention including formats of education with CEUs, luncheons, big name concerts, sporting event tickets and custom shopping experiences. Having a planner perspective on these events can help DMOs and suppliers make the best use of your time. Apart from your availability on a given date and that doing business someday with the event host is a possibility, what other factors help you decide to click YES?



Ultimately, I tend to click YES to events that are run by people or organizations with whom I have a previous relationship and want to continue to support



BROOKE'S ANSWER

As a planner, I am invited to many events, and it's often unrealistic to attend everything. When I receive an invitation, I first look to see where the event is taking place. If an event is taking place at a location I'm unfamiliar with such as a new hotel or special event space then I'm more inclined to go. This invitation now includes an opportunity to see a new space while also networking with our partners. Additionally, I appreciate when suppliers offer events at optional times. Planners' schedule flexibility fluctuates throughout the year. Sometimes, events scheduled outside working hours work best, for when we can't leave our desks, and other times events held during working hours are more convenient for those who might have obligations after work that prevent them from attending.

Another consideration when accepting an invitation is whether the event/experience will be approved. Before I can agree to participate at an event or accept a gift, I must receive approval due to an internal policy about accepting gifts/experiences valued over a certain dollar amount.

Ultimately, I tend to click YES to events that are run by people or organizations with whom I have a previous relationship and want to continue to support, or vendors I would like to work with in the future. Call me old school, but I believe there are great benefits to meeting face-to-face with someone you will do business with in the future regardless of what fun offer may be on the table.

Do you have a question you would like tackled? Send it to pcma.capital.comm@gmail.com, our committee would appreciate the chance to share material that interests you, our member!

Kristen Parker

CASE, Director of Eastern Regional Sales, Visit Austin

Brooke Hirsch

Senior Manager Conferences and Events,
Consumer Technology Association



Chapter Members and Their Pets

Sara Torrence, President, Torrence and Associates, and her husband Jim rescued a beautiful Siamese Mix from the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center in April 2016. Sara explained that their cream tabby Siamese Mix has beautiful blue eyes, which is why they named him Frank, after the original “Ole Blue Eyes” Frank Sinatra.

Frank is very affectionate and social, making friends easily. His favorite toy is a feather on a wand or any box – he scratches boxes, hides and sleeps in them.

Sara describes Frank as a wonderful fur-son who is very calming after a stressful day!

Do you have a special pet story/ picture you would like to share with your PCMA family? Send an email to pcma.capital.comm@gmail.com with your story and a picture of your pet.

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Positive Disruption Requires Patience

Four years ago, the American Society for Microbiology, under the leadership of Kirsten Olean, CAE, Director of Meetings, introduced a major disruption to the two meetings per year status quo expected by ASM's membership – it combined those meetings into one.

The skepticism, from some members, about what the combined program would look like resulted in some drop in attendance initially; however, as the organization enters the fourth year of change, abstract submissions (one barometer for expected attendance) are up significantly. Kirsten believes they are now in the “upward trajectory phase” of growth and as she looks back and ahead, she notes some recommendations to planners looking to make disruptive change.



It is important to listen to both attendees and potential attendees; at the end of the day, programming needs to meet the needs of members.



PATIENCE

You cannot disrupt a program and expect it to be an overnight success. In ASM's case, it has taken three years of the new meeting to enter this phase of growth.

LISTEN/COMMUNICATION

It is important to listen to both attendees and potential attendees; at the end of the day, programming needs to meet the needs of members. While there are always a few who would like to take the meeting back to “the good old days”, ASM has found there is more support for the current trajectory. Each iteration of the meeting is only better because of the continued feedback from members.

MAKE CHANGES ALONG THE WAY

Find productive ways to incorporate change. ASM has made significant changes each year based on member feedback. This continued disruption helps to continually create a fresh meeting experience, one that involves the attendee and insures continued success.

MITIGATE RISKS

Disrupt, but respect tradition, this will help attendees tolerate the disruption, incorporate changes while maintaining comfort zones.

For instance, ASM's traditional method of educational delivery tends not to significantly engage the audience (typically a formal presentation followed by a brief question and answer period). Rather than eliminate that format, ASM maintained the formal presentation structure and supplemented it with more informal interactive opportunities throughout the meeting.

The introduction of less formal sessions turned out to be a positive disruption that was received with great enthusiasm by the attendees.

In addition to the typical two-hour sessions, ASM created shorter, more engaging sessions in informal spaces on and off the show floor. Last year, they added intimate fireside chats to enhance the networking experience. These informal education and networking sessions increase attendee engagement and the likelihood an attendee will return year over year.

Thank you Kirsten for sharing your experience with our Capital Chapter Community! Your perspective and willingness to enlighten our members is appreciated.

I'm looking forward to what our next guest has to share, please contact me at tpearman@silverlegacy.com to share your disruptive topic (positive or negative) idea for a future issue.

Tanna Pearman
Business Development Director,
The Row, Reno, NV

What Are You Reading?

As we travel throughout the world handling site visits, meetings, attending trade events and making our mark on the world, what are we reading?

Throughout the year we will feature different books that are impacting you our members. This issue we feature two great books designed to propel us toward success from two completely different viewpoints.

PITCH ANYTHING BY OREN KLAFF

I'm sure there are times when planners are not a part of conversations that end up having a big impact on any aspect of logistical/meeting planning. We all know and understand that planning and all its logistical components are tricky to maneuver. It requires a delicate balance of diplomacy and negotiation. This book reveals how science is used through neuroeconomics and how the brain makes decisions and responds to pitches. The exclusive STRONG method: Setting the frame, Telling the story, Revealing the intrigue, Offering the prize, Nailing the hookpoint, Getting a decision

Stacey Trey, Meetings Manager
Smart Electric Power Alliance

OPTION B: FACING ADVERSITY, BUILDING RESILIENCE AND FINDING JOY BY SHERYL SANDBERG

A sentence that I loved in the book - "Resilience comes from deep within us and from support outside us. Resilience is the strength and speed of our response to adversity". I believe that no matter chosen career, family life or support group, we all experience adversity and must be resilient as we strive to build a better life for ourselves and those around us.

Geralyn Krist, CMP,
Global Account Executive ConferenceDirect

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Discovery Studio: The Art of Gathering

Members of the PCMA Capital Chapter had to pause for a moment on February 7 when they walked into the newly branded Discovery Studio event. A room set with large concentric circles and no stage. What were we in for? It was Vicki Johnson, Capital Chapter President's question that might have caused more disruption to our regularly scheduled program as we began the first education event of the year.

What keeps you up at night? What are the things that you worry about in your job, your career? What gives you bad dreams that you can't seem to shake? Some attendees gave their thoughts and suggestions, but many were still wrestling with these questions as our keynote speaker began.

Priya Parker is a woman with a diverse multi-cultural background that has prepared her for a career in conflict resolution. Priya started her session by asking a series of simple questions: "Is this your first time at a chapter event? Do you find your job stressful? Did you come with someone you love?" With each question, a new group emerged who shared a common thread. This same concept of questioning attendees can be used in our events. If you combine common threads, you will build an event for attendees that is meaningful and fulfills a purpose.

Purpose should be a starting point for an event. Priya reminded us to reflect on why you are hosting events –

what is the need? Meetings should be transformative with a meaningful purpose! To create an event full of purpose, you need to tell a story with a beginning, middle and end. "Most meetings don't end, they stop" said Priya. The power of an actual ending is creating a memory that your attendees will take back with them.

Priya's book, *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why it Matters*, was given to attendees as a reminder to have purposeful events, tell the story and remember that all meetings must come to a meaningful end.

PCMA Capital Chapter
Professional Development Committee





THE CHATTER IS PUBLISHED BY

PCMA Capital Chapter

Attn: Bea Tijerina
1420 New York Ave, NW, 5th Floor
Washington D.C. 20005
Phone: 202-802-9032
Email: capital@pcma.org

CHATTER INFO

ISSUE EDITORS

Marilyn Atchue-zuill
Global Account Director, HPN

Christina Pino, CMP
Project Manager, Stellato Meetin Solutions

PRODUCTION EDITORS

Anna Genova
Senior Graphic Designer
Interel US



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