

## New Skills for the New Normal

# PCMA's Digital Event Strategist

As an event professional, you are almost guaranteed to have recently moved your in-person meetings to virtual formats. Prohibition of large gatherings in many jurisdictions has drastically changed delivery of the content and experience for which we are responsible. Event professionals have had to creatively ensure that the culture of the organization is represented in the virtual experience, while learning new skills and platforms.

Event professionals are already applying their experience with project management, event design, and success measurement to virtual delivery. Content must be designed to reach the audience differently in the virtual landscape. "How you present content in a virtual setting must be more dynamic than a F2F event. The attendee must want that knowledge, more than they want to do the 27 other things which might distract them during a virtual session" expressed recent DES graduate Jenn Schaeffer, CMP, DES, of Client Hospitality. Ensuring that the virtual experience echoes the expectations of attendees from previous programs is both vital and challenging.

That's not easy when you have technology to consider. Event professionals have had to assume MANY new roles, including those resembling an IT Specialist, while ensuring that content is digestible to attendees using platforms that achieve established goals. As a result, event professionals from varied backgrounds have turned to education to fill the gap, completing the Digital Event Strategist certification in as little as 7 weeks. The program is based online, and community support is available among classmates as they complete the coursework and exam. But you may be surprised at the benefits following this program yields. Many event professionals report that they expected to receive specific instruction on latest practices from platform selection to technology integration, yet found themselves first completing modules in general event management topics.

This feedback indicates that the DES is being pursued by event professionals at all levels of experience, including industry veterans, showing investment in the success of virtual programming and the value of the designation itself. Event professionals may complement instruction offered by the certification with their own knowledge and practical experience. "The DES gives me the confidence and knowledge to help my clients develop a virtual strategy that can then be "pivoted" into a hybrid strategy. DES includes some basic meeting planner info, but it made me look at it in a more strategic way that will help advance clients' overall mission. Another client saw that I earned the certification and hired me to help train their speakers and monitor the Q&A and a chat room", said recent DES graduate Annette Suriani, CMP, DES, of AMS Meetings Solutions.

It is difficult to determine how the recent shift to virtual programming will impact the way that content is consistently offered into the distant future. For now, event professionals are applying expertise, education, and flexibility to meet the needs of their attendees, quite literally, where they stand.

**Christina Pino**, CMP, DES, Conference Logistics and Design Manager  
*Stellato Meeting Solutions*

**Mark Harvey**, CMP, CMM, Principal  
*Ethos Meetings and Events*



Digital  
Event  
Strategist  
CERTIFICATION

### The PCMA Capital Chapter is where "You Belong"!

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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Email if you have comments or suggestions. We are also accepting articles for our library to be used for future issues. If you would like to submit an article, send an email for guidelines



**message from the board**

**CONNECTIONS ARE ENERGY**



*"I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship."*

- Brené Brown

With everyone at home and social distancing, it is difficult to stay connected with existing relationships and build new ones. Our friends and colleagues are being affected daily with news of furloughs, layoffs, new roles and responsibilities, learning new skills, changing careers and going back to work full-time. Lending support and lifting each other up creates positive energy in this roller coaster world.

**#Relationshipsmatter**

The Marketing and Communications Committees are PCMA Capital Chapter's solutions to staying connected, informed, and engaged. They provide chapter news on upcoming events, diversity and inclusion, new industry trends and share our daily successes. Both committees work together to provide the tools you need to stay connected and maintain strong relationships. If you haven't already, engage with us on our Social Media Channels:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/PCMACC>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/pcmacapitalchapter/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PCMACC>

LinkedIn Page: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1826353/>

**Follow Daily #campaigns on all channels above.**

#membermondays | #tipstuesday | #wellnesswednesday  
#throwbackthursday | #fantasticfridays

If you are interested in contributing to the #campaigns, submit to Carson [Carson.edwards@marriott.com](mailto:Carson.edwards@marriott.com) or Kelly [kfland@nacacnet.org](mailto:kfland@nacacnet.org).

The Communications Committee has worked diligently to transform the printed newsletter to a new, digital Chatter. Share your story, experience, education, or inspiration by writing an article for The Chatter. Submit articles to Kristen [kparker@visitaustin.org](mailto:kparker@visitaustin.org) or Rosa [rosa.mendoza@conferencedirect.com](mailto:rosa.mendoza@conferencedirect.com)

And finally, if your email address has changed, send your new email address to Vicki Johnson at [vicki@vjmeetings.com](mailto:vicki@vjmeetings.com). We want to be connected with you!

**UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN...**

|| **Ashley Eubanks**, Board of Directors,  
*Communications Pillar*



**SoCal's Award-Winning Convention Event Space.** Long Beach's latest experiential turnkey innovation, the **Terrace Fountains**, is surrounded by an expansive outdoor plaza which can accommodate anything from an intimate gathering of 100 up to 5,000 excited guests. A perfect after-meeting party space to lounge around or play around, this large reflecting pool with theatrical dancing water displays can be designed with your personalized colors chosen from hundreds of LEDs. Stylish furniture, professional light and sound design that can **save you up to \$100,000 in rental costs** and set in a highly walkable downtown — it's the hottest new convention event space in the coolest beach city.

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# Investing In Your Future

## Which Certification is Right for You?

As we have all spent the last six months shifting our focus on the future of meetings, both virtual and live, there may have been some opportunities to complete various well-known certifications such as Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) or Certified Exhibition Manager (CEM). There are several additional certifications available that will expand your knowledge base within our industry. If you are looking to sharpen your skill set or pursuing a new career path, now is the time to focus on yourself and your future.

Whether you are interested in sustainability, safety and security, catering and/or fundamentals in cleaning and disinfecting, many certifications can be completed in just a few weeks or months. Take some time to focus on what may be a new opportunity for yourself. Tell a friend or colleague who may also be interested in developing or adding to their skill set.

A collection of certifications and affiliated organizations are listed below. Best of Luck!

- **Professional Convention Management Association - PCMA**  
[www.pcma.org/engage/learning-products/](http://www.pcma.org/engage/learning-products/)
  - Business Events Compass, Certified Association Sales Executive (CASE), Digital Event Strategist Certification (-DES), Incentive, Conference and Event Professional Certificate Course, Business Event Bootcamp, CMP Online Prep
- **Meeting Professionals International -MPI**  
[www.mpi.org/education/certificate-programs](http://www.mpi.org/education/certificate-programs)
  - Multiple certifications and trainings including Event Crisis Communication Certificate, Meetings and Events at Sea Certificate, Event Design Certificate
- **International Association Exhibitions and Events - IAEE**  
[www.iaee.com/education-events/](http://www.iaee.com/education-events/)
  - Certified in Exhibition Management (CEM) Professional Designation, Online Workplace Violence and Active Shooter Preparedness Training
- **International Association of Venue Managers**  
[www.iavm.org/certifications](http://www.iavm.org/certifications)
  - Certified Venue Professional (CVP) and Certified Venue Executive(CVE)
- **International Sanitary Supply Association - ISSA - The World Wide Cleaning Industry Association**  
[www.issa.com/gbac-fundamentals](http://www.issa.com/gbac-fundamentals)
  - Global Biorisk Advisory Council GBAC- Trained Technician- Fundamental Online Course- Cleaning and Disinfecting Principles
- **International Live Events Association – ILEA**  
[www.ileahub.com/CSEP](http://www.ileahub.com/CSEP)
  - Certified Special Events Professional
- **Events Industry Council – EIC**  
[www.eventscouncil.org](http://www.eventscouncil.org)
  - Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) Certified Meeting Professional Healthcare(CMP-HC) Sustainable Event Professional Certificate Programme
- **Association of Destination Management Executives International**  
[www.admei.org/certacc/](http://www.admei.org/certacc/)
  - Destination Management Certified Professional (DMCP)
- **Society for Incentive Travel Excellence**  
[www.siteglobal.com/page/cis-certification](http://www.siteglobal.com/page/cis-certification)
  - Certified Incentive Specialist( CIS) and Certified Incentive Travel Professional(CITP)
- **Global Business Travel Association**  
[www.gbta.org/professional-development/global-travel-professional-certification](http://www.gbta.org/professional-development/global-travel-professional-certification)
  - Global Travel Professional Certification (GTP)
- **The American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute – AHLEI**  
[www.ahlei.org/individuals/get-certified](http://www.ahlei.org/individuals/get-certified)
  - Several hospitality certifications available for all professions in hotel and hospitality
- **Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International HSMIAI** <https://global.hsmia.org/certification/>
  - Certified Hospitality Digital Marketer (CHDM), Certified Revenue Management Executive (CRME) Certified in Hospitality Business Acumen (CHBA)
- **Society of Government Meeting Professional - SGMP**  
[www.sgmp.org/cgmpbenefits](http://www.sgmp.org/cgmpbenefits)
  - Certified Government Meeting Professionals
- **National Speakers Association NSA –** [www.nsaspeaker.org/csp/](http://www.nsaspeaker.org/csp/)
  - Certified Speaking Professional (CSP)
- **Exhibition Services and Contractors Association - ESCA**  
[www.esca.org/education/](http://www.esca.org/education/)
  - Training classes available
- **Audiovisual and Integrated Experience Association – AVIXA**  
[www.avixa.org/training-certification](http://www.avixa.org/training-certification)
  - Certified Technology Specialist (CTS) CTS- D- Design, CTS- I – Installation
- **National Association of Catering Executives - NACE**  
<https://www.nace.net/grow/cpce/>
  - The Certified Professional in Catering and Events (CPCE)

|| Stacey Knoppel, Director, Convention Management  
Events DC | Conventions and Meetings



# Key Ingredients for Virtual Site Visits

With virtual site visits likely to stay around a bit longer, supplier partners are looking for ways to improve on what they created earlier this year as a temporary tool. I asked two event professionals who took a virtual site visit for some candid feedback on what worked well that should continue and what could be enhanced going forward.

**Kristin Pichon, CMP**, Meetings Manager with AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine took a Zoom virtual site of a destination she had never been to for a future event which she ended up selecting. **She shared the following insight:**

- Navigating the convention center virtually with a professionally done 360 tour, versus just looking at a floor plan was extremely helpful in getting a true idea of the space. Being able to see what the foyer areas look like and even “look out” of the window to see how close a hotel property is to the entrance really helps give a realistic perspective.
- A suggestion might be to bring in other members of the Center/hotel team that we would typically meet on an in-person site visit – Catering, AV/internet provider, HQ hotel sales manager, who can answer specific questions around these areas. Or perhaps ask the client in advance who the top 3 people they want to meet and customize it for each group depending on their needs and what's most important.
- To manage time depending on how much will be covered, consider breaking the site up into hour increments to allow for short breaks. Get a list from the client of specific things that need to be touched on during the tour of each area.

**Lisa L. Dyson, CMP, DES**, Director Strategic Events with TESOL International Association did a planning virtual site of multiple venues which gave her the opportunity to experience a variety of tools used.

## What did work:

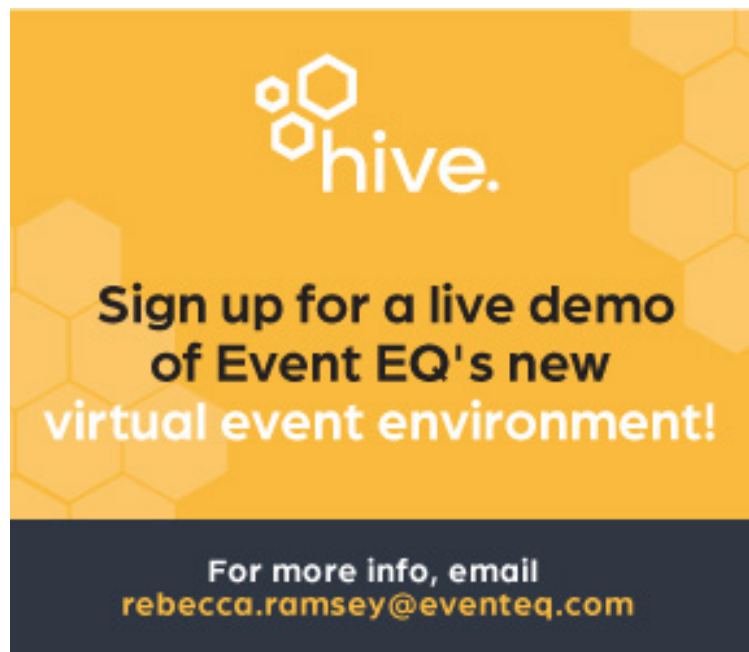
- Microsoft teams worked very well as the platform, especially for the discussion/Q&A portion of the site visit
- The availability of the key individuals I needed to speak with to get questions answered
- Not having to get on a plane and be out of the office for a few days

## What didn't work:

- Use of an iPhone which often was showing the floor, and when space was showed it was dark
- Power point presentation with photos of the space vs. a live video walkthrough or 3D tour option made it impossible to figure out our registration area without seeing/standing in the space as there were a couple different options

Lisa shared, “Overall, I think that convention centers and hotels that embrace virtual sites using equipment beyond a cell phone will be successful in conducting virtual planning visits. There is no substitute for seeing the space. I know some are working with the next gen 3D video tours/videos. And those are pretty cool and helpful.”

No doubt, we all share Lisa's feeling that there is no substitute for seeing the space in person. Until we can dust off that pair of comfy site visit shoes, it's helpful to have this advice on how to make the virtual site visit as valuable as possible. Combining the right technology tools with the right venue experts, plus a little creativity and convenience, seems to be the ideal mix!



|| **Kristen Parker**, CASE Director of Eastern Regional Sales  
Visit [Austin](#)



## What's Next in the Life of **ALICIA MONTAGUE, DES**

Alicia's career has taken some twists and turns along the road, yet to this day she hasn't detoured from higher education. At the start of her career travels, she worked in Advising and Admissions at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. This position included some event planning, which was to lead her down an unsuspected path. Her explorations took her in the direction of career services, as the Event Operations Coordinator at Johns Hopkins University Carey Business School followed by the Career Events Coordinator at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Then came a fork in the road and Alicia had to decide which way to go. Opportunities for growth were limited within the University system and working on fundraising events didn't interest her. The other road led to NASPA, an association that focuses on professional development for those in higher education, specifically student affairs. It was a hard but rewarding choice. Her position as Meetings Manager has given her the opportunity to plan a variety of events, from 800 person meetings to their annual conference of 8,000 and she loves what she does! As far as Alicia is concerned, you can't be in this industry and not love what you're doing. The job is rewarding and fun, yet stressful and demanding all in one and plain HARD WORK!

With the arrival of COVID 19, Alicia has come to the biggest twist in her career journey - that of virtual and hybrid meetings. Seeing so many of her industry colleagues furloughed or their positions eliminated has been hard, and she feels fortunate to still have her job. NASPA made that possible by ensuring her position remained relevant, especially

now that their meetings are currently all virtual and may eventually move to hybrid. Digital and hybrid meetings have opened new doors for those in the meetings industry and Alicia is really excited about it. Event professionals everywhere are being taken out of their comfort zones, learning new skills and creative ways to engage their members and attendees. For that reason, Alicia invested in the Digital Events Strategist (DES) certification through PCMA. She felt it was important to expand her knowledge and experience in digital engagements since that is NASPA's new normal. To become even more valuable, Alicia is also studying for the CMP exam and hopes to have that designation behind her name by the end of this year. Traveling forward, she would like to be more involved in the strategic development of events and the framework of content.

If Alicia were to change directions and stray away from higher education, she would go into the community-based assistance field, which would allow her to contribute in another meaningful way. When she first started college, her goal was to be a juvenile probation officer. Always wanting to give back in some way, she sees herself working at Goodwill or WIC (Women, Infants and Children). Alicia thinks that working on federal programs would be highly rewarding.

For now, where does Alicia see herself down the road? Hopefully, at an in-person event!

|| **Marilyn Atchue-Zuill**, Global Account Director  
HPN Global

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# Job Searching is Not a Solo Sport

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is no secret that this has been one of the most challenging periods in history, especially for our hospitality community. We are in truly unprecedented times and PCMA's Capital Chapter is here for you. Whether you're newly out of work, are new to the job market, or have been job searching since before the outbreak began, we wanted to share **a few steps you can take as you navigate the job search and to stay motivated.**

- 1. UPDATE YOUR RESUME.** To give yourself the best chance of standing out in the candidate pool, it is important to tailor your resume so your background and experience align with the positions you are looking for now. A few tips for updating your resume:
  - a. Include a summary statement instead of an objective. A resume objective tells the recruiter what you want. A summary statement, on the other hand, explains what value you can bring to them.
  - b. Optimize your resume skills table; a section where you can include keywords or phrases that are specific to the job description, company, or industry and draw the reader's attention to them.
  - c. Demonstrate your success with numbers that show efficiency, money saved or secured for a business, or goals exceeded.

Be sure to **post your resume on all job boards**, including LinkedIn, Indeed, and Glassdoor and email a copy to family, friends, and associates in your network.

- 2. BUILD AND AUDIT YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE.** Your personal brand consists of your professional reputation (i.e. how others see you) and of your professional persona (i.e. how you want others to perceive you as a professional). Any online content associated with your name is part of your brand and can be an opportunity or a liability. Control your online narrative.
  - a. Be sure your LinkedIn profile is updated with your most recent education, work experiences, etc.
  - b. Post regularly on your accounts so that your colleagues in your field will keep you in mind when opportunities come up. Posts can be relevant articles, content you have created, motivational quotes, progress reports, what you are looking for, etc.
- 3. CREATE A CAREER PLAN TO SERVE AS A ROADMAP FOR YOUR FUTURE.** It can help you make informed choices about your most recent job, future opportunities, and serve as inspiration along your journey. Ask yourself these questions to jumpstart your reflection and planning:
  - a. What are you passionate about?
  - b. What are you really good at?
  - c. What topics and ideas spark your curiosity?
  - d. What are your natural strengths that you love to use?
  - e. What are three directions your career could go in five years? Ten years?

- 4. BOOST YOUR SKILLS.** If you find that you have a skill gap or you would like to move in a different direction, take advantage of this downtime to gain what you need through online learning. Seek out free websites, courses, and podcasts that cover professional development topics, or work on your leadership and communication skills. Some to check out include: [TheMuse.com](#), [LinkedIn Learning](#), [Coursera](#), [YouTube](#), and [The School of Greatness with Lewis Howes Podcast](#).
- 5. ACTIVATE AND GROW YOUR NETWORK.** Research shows that upwards of 85 percent of jobs are filled through networking so, by reaching out selectively to those you know and trust, you will get ideas, leads, introductions, and maybe even a job. A few ways to engage in online networking include:
  - a. Sending outreach emails - to former colleagues, mentors, friends, and friends of friends asking for a Zoom meeting to discuss their career journey, ask for advice/resume feedback, learn about a company/job, or request an informational interview/introduction.
  - b. Posting a plea for help on your social media channels - LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Many people are in similar situations and your contacts will be eager to help you out if they can.
  - c. Asking former supervisors and co-workers to post testimonials or recommendations for you on LinkedIn.

Though finding yourself un- or underemployed is never easy, it can feel all the more stressful amid a global health crisis. Remember you are not alone, and we are here for you. We are #HospitalityStrong. We hope these tips will help you navigate the job search during this time. The economy will bounce back and there will be pent-up demand for unflappable, hard-working professionals — just like you.

Shameka Jennings, MTA, CMP, Director of Meetings and Partnership Development  
*National Coalition of STD Directors*

## INTRODUCING CONNECTNOW:

### Meet 1:1 for Peer Career Coaching during COVID19

The Emerging Professionals Committee has revamped the Chapter's Mentorship Program to fit the needs of our members due to COVID. From a student entering the business events industry to a seasoned event professional dusting off their resume, we can all learn from each other.

Sign up today as a mentee or mentor to provide peer guidance on how to navigate through job hunting and sharpen your interview skills.

<https://generationmeet.com/mentorship/>



## Another Spark Program for the Books!

On August 27, 2020, the PCMA Capital Chapter hosted the 2nd Virtual Spark education program of the year. Back in January, the Professional Development Committee had selected the topic of Designing Experiences for Q3 Spark. However, with our industry in crisis and several of our friends and colleagues out of work, we decided to shift gears and design an education program focused on giving members the tools they need to be their best selves professionally.

The result? Power Up: Your Personal Guide to Professional Growth. With a committee eager to help, we set out to design an ambitious education program all the while learning a new virtual platform. Our friends at EventEQ generously sponsored the use of their HIVE platform and went above and beyond in creating a branded virtual lobby, expo booths for program sponsors, and attendee lounges in addition to all the sessions rooms. The team stepped up in a big way! In a very short amount of planning time, we confirmed a high-profile keynote speaker, 6 breakout sessions, and a closing networking event!

From the inspiring Bonnie St. John, who taught us about resilience, to Amy Thomasson who led a session on How to Optimize Your LinkedIn Profile and Enhance Your Personal Brand, to a great panel discussion on COVID forced career changes, to Erin Prangle's session on Power Mapping, and so much more, we covered a lot of ground!! AND bonus, registered attendees can access all the

sessions on the EventEQ platform using the link sent to them in the "Know Before You Go" email from Rebecca Ramsey.

With the focus on creating an engaging closing event, we recruited the multi-talented Deedre Daniels, founder of The Interesting Conversation Company, which was created to help people better connect through a training class (How to be More Interesting than a Cell Phone), book, and interactive card game.

We hand-picked 6 players from the list of registered members and played the game live with Deedre as the game show host. Attendees were able to use the chat box to submit their answers, support the players, and be a part of the game while watching it happen as a participant. It provided much laughter, relief, and engagement from everyone and, based on the feedback received so far, it was one of the highlights of the program.

Thank you to an awesome team who worked tirelessly to make this event happen. It does take a village and we are grateful for the support of all the Chapter Committee Chairs, Spark Champions, and volunteers. See you October 29th for our next and final Spark event of the year!! #FOMO

**Danielle Foisy**, FASAE, CASE, Director, Business Development & Industry Relations  
TMS | Corporate Office

***"The August Spark event was absolutely amazing! It was extremely informative, and they made it a lot of fun. I especially liked that we had an "MC" to keep things moving along and that the entire seminar was interactive with all of us adding in comments made it even better. Great job Capital Chapter!"***

- Kristen Gibson

## Save the Date! October 29 - SPARK Q4

The PCMA Capital Chapter's Q4 Spark program will take place on October 29! While the audience will not be meeting face-to-face, you will get the chance to virtually experience a live event fully produced from a local venue to be announced soon. The event theme, **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Not Just a Talking Point!**, will offer a thought-provoking session on unconscious bias, a hands-on workshop to develop the skills and language you need to mitigate biases, showcase a meaningful conversation around race, and more. If you are curious to see what a face-to-face event may look like in the near future, but from the safety of your home or office, sign up to attend Spark on October 29! Visit the Capital Chapter website for speaker details and registration information coming soon.





## Get Out and Vote

Now that the 2020 national election ballot has been set, we can focus on the particulars of voting. While it would be nice if we all did our civic duty and participated actively in this election by voting, it is understandable why some may have a lack of enthusiasm for the process, the system, the candidates... the whole ball of wax. However, this is one instance where the only way to make it work for you, is for you to participate. Here is some food for thought as we navigate Election 2020.

### VOTER REGISTRATION

Make sure that you and all the adults in your household, family, and your circle of friends are properly registered to vote and have the proper identification documents required to cast a ballot. September 22nd is **Voter Registration Day**; make a goal to have all eligible adults in your circle registered by that day.

### KNOW THE RULES

Go to the website of your State Board of Elections to learn state voting requirements. You should understand when early voting starts, where you can cast your ballots for early voting, and election day voting. You also need to know what the rules, dates, and deadlines are for absentee and early voting. Knowledge on how to secure and submit mail-in ballots is of major importance, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a hindrance to public gatherings.

### DETERMINE YOUR POSITION

Take some time out to research the candidates. Understand where they stand on issues important to you and your household in order to make an informed decision. There are so many issues other than who will occupy

the White House which are at stake, such as judicial appointments, health care, economic strategies, global partnerships, tax laws, federal, state, and local funding options, educational choices.

### VOLUNTEER

Volunteering is a great way to see the reach of advocacy in action. Here are some ways to support your community by volunteering:

Work the neighborhood call center to see who needs a ride to the polls and assist with scheduling those rides.

Sign-up to work the polls – checking people in, keeping order in the lines, providing information pamphlets – every little bit helps.

Participate in a ride share program to transport neighbors to area polling stations; or maybe create a walking group to walk from your “street” to the polling place together.

Coordinate with neighbors and community leaders to deliver mail-in ballots to the proper elections officer.

Advocate for you, your family, and your community by participating and sharing this info. More importantly, share this with your children or the youth in your family or community. The earlier they know and understand, the stronger their commitment to voting will be.

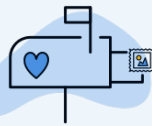
**Lastly, wear your mask and keep a safe distance. Happy Voting!**

|| **Cyndie Graddy, CMP, HMCC**  
*Independent Consultant*

## What I Did This Summer

**Yvette Clark, CMP**, Director of Meetings and Events, Council on Social Work Education:

- I have used this time to connect with friends and family with handwritten notes and cards. It makes the time go by and there is nothing like a little love in the mailbox. Try it! Reach out and spread some joy. Be safe and stay connected.



**Sara Stehle, CMP, DES**, Senior Manager of Meetings, Society of American Military Engineers:

- I'm a meeting planner but I am a woman of many talents and also reupholster furniture. This summer I had chair-a-palooza where I had 5 chairs, a bench cushion, dog bed, and assortment of other pieces to finish. It's a great creative outlet and I love sharing what I am up to with people on social media. As Mike Rowe says, safety third!



**Eric Commodore, CMP**, Director, Meeting & Event Planning, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association:

- Eric enjoyed singing with Restored Vocal Band. [Click here to enjoy this cover of "Used to be My Girl."](#)



**Ron Sipes**, National Account Executive, VisitHouston

- After spending several months locked down at home in Florida, we decided it was time for a break. We took the time recently to visit our friends in Southampton, NY where we relaxed and enjoyed some fishing and kayaking. Looking forward to things getting better and hopefully back to work in the next couple of months. Be safe and stay strong.



|| **Lynn Whitehead**, National Sales Director, Citywide Conventions  
*San Diego Tourism Authority*

# How a Virtual Trivia Night Turned into a \$10,000 Industry Give-Back

In need of a feel-good story amidst the craziness of 2020? Let me introduce you to my friend Kacie.

Kacie Hackett, Event Manager with Internet Association, is a PCMA member and former winner of PCMA's 20 in Their Twenties, has found a way to give back as our world continues to battle COVID-19.

In March, Kacie was monitoring the news with the rest of the world and quickly realized things would get worse before getting better. She decided to dust off her trivia hosting skills and create a virtual trivia game for her friends so they could still "get together." She felt guilty creating an activity that was typically enjoyed at the bar while bars and restaurants were suffering, so she decided to ask players for a suggested \$5 donation which could be given back to the hospitality and service industry.

As Kacie began to master her virtual trivia skills, she quickly realized this trivia game was an opportunity to experiment with online events, a skill set we all need these days! What started as a way for her friends to gather and socialize while adhering to our new normal guidelines, quickly turned into a weekly game that attracted virtual attendees from all over. In a short amount of time, Kacie's efforts have received over \$10,000 in donations.

I recently caught up with Kacie to learn more about what she has been up to.

**BROOKE:** When did you notice your weekly games were attracting more than just friends?

**KACIE:** Things seem to have picked up in waves. I noticed by the second or third game friends of friends were joining, and by the fourth or fifth game, people were joining the game I didn't know, nor did I know how they found the game! That was actually a pretty cool moment. By the end of May, the game was featured in a story in the Washington Post – from there, things really took off and we were getting players from around the country, and world!

**BROOKE:** The Washington Post? Very cool, how did that come about?

**KACIE:** A friend of mine was living in China and was a member of a pretty competitive ex-pat trivia team that met for weekly trivia games. When things in China shut down, my friend introduced my games to her team. One of the team members was a journalist and featured my games in a story.

**BROOKE:** How did you raise so much money in donations? Who have you donated to and how did you pick those organizations?

**KACIE:** Donations are entirely voluntary. As people sign up to play a game, I ask that they donate for their participation. It has been humbling to see how generous people are and how much money we are raising.



I started by focusing on individuals in the hospitality and service industry who lost wages when places started shutting down. We hit \$10,000 right around July 4th and I took a short break to reevaluate the game and donations. People still seemed very interested in playing weekly, so now "Season 2" of the game is focused on assisting individuals facing evictions, those needing rent assistance and performing artists out of work.

**BROOKE:** How can someone join your games?

**KACIE:** The games are designed to play with a team. First, I suggest you recruit some friends to join you! The beauty of the game is your friends can physically be anywhere. One of the cooler aspects of hosting these games is seeing groups "gather" from all over – we have college roommates who reunite weekly and a family with a son in the service and stationed thousands of miles away. Trivia is the vessel for people to schedule a time to laugh and catch up in this new world.

We are now seeing an increase in requests for games organized for professional opportunities. For example, I am working with a company now that is interested in hosting a trivia game as a replacement for an in-person networking event for an upcoming conference. I am excited to expand our reach!

For more information: [kaciehackett.com/trivia](http://kaciehackett.com/trivia)

**BROOKE:** Thank you, Kacie! I am so proud to call you a friend and what you have accomplished to make the most of an uncertain time!

**Brooke Hirsch**, Senior Manager, Events & Conferences  
Consumer Technology Association, producer of CES®

**Let us Know  
In the Chat:**

The song that makes you want to dance? What's your pet's name

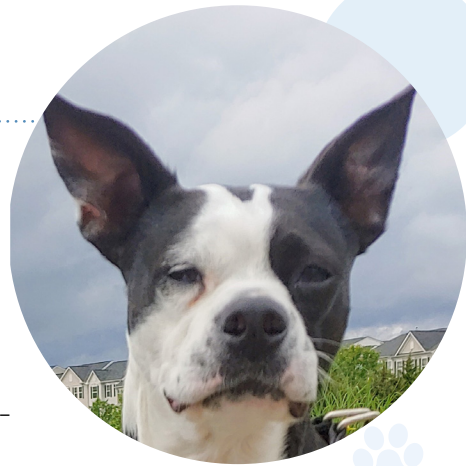


## Round 4 Round Up: Spoiler Alert - Part 2

1. This war was ended by the Treaty of Ghent.
2. What 2003 best selling novel ends with the following sentence: "I ran with the wind blowing in my face, and a smile as wide as the valley of Panjsher on my lips. I ran."
3. If you're hiking North to South, this ends at Springer Mountain, Georgia. If you're hiking South to North, you'll end in Katahdin, Maine.
4. The creators of what television series said they knew the last words of the show the day they wrote the pilot, but the creators were not involved in the final season? The last words, "Mom, I'm pregnant", were uttered when the show was brought back by Netflix for a 4-part revival.
5. What Broadway musical's closing number ends with "You Can't Stop the Beat"?
6. For 2 points each, name the singer/group where this is the last song on the album. A) Finish Line / Drown. B) Macy's Day Parade. C) The Best of My Love



## 2020 special feature



# Chapter Members and their Pets

Michelle Morgan, Director of Regional Sales, Greater Palm Springs CVB, is a huge animal lover and has been involved with animal rescue for years. She has lots of great stories to tell, including some foster fails. (In case you're not familiar, a failed foster is when an animal foster falls madly in love and foster turns into adoption!) Even as a child, Michelle was bringing home injured and homeless animals – which made her mom constantly wonder what each day and potential new animal would bring.

While Michelle has rescued and provided a loving home to four dogs over the years, she holds a passion for all animals. In fact, as a teenager she owned a horse that was part of a therapeutic riding program where horses were paired with special needs kids and adults.

Fast forward to today – Michelle's Boston terrier mix, Roxy, is a rescue from rural Virginia.




Roxy was just a puppy when she brought her home and has an interesting story to tell. Her previous owner was a long-haul trucker and it's obvious Roxy was a road warrior because she'll happily jump into any car. The happy part is Michelle rescued her; the sad part is Roxy was actually posted in a local newspaper available for free to anyone who would take her. We all know that usually doesn't end well. Luckily, an animal rescue group rescued Roxy and listed her for adoption on Petfinder.com where Michelle found her.

Having had large, mellow dogs in the past, Roxy was a bit of a shift. Roxy was on the smaller side, not house trained, destructive and a bit crazy at first. Michelle wondered, "What have I gotten myself into?" Being part of Michelle's life for three years now, Roxy has adjusted well. She is wonderful, very calm, and sweet, the total opposite of her previous self! Roxy is a good friend to Michelle's 2.5-year-old son, Drew. They are precious together, proving that Roxy just needed a little love and patience – And the right family!

Animals have so much to teach us. They are resilient, kind, generous and forgiving. Michelle will tell you, in even the worst of circumstances, if given enough nurturing and patience, animals can adapt and return the love ten-fold. They are amazing in so many ways.

|| Amanda Clark, CMP

## Roxy Fun Facts:

-  She has unbelievably giant ears making it impossible not to love her!
-  She loves to burrow under the covers.
-  She is intuitive and super intelligent.





## as seen on *PCMA catalyst*

### VIRTUAL OPTIONS FOR INTERPRETERS

Rich Vallaster, CEM, Chief Strategy Officer for eduWeb Digital Summit put out an S.O.S. to the PCMA Catalyst community and received multiple lifelines thrown his way!

Virtual events have created a larger opportunity for inclusion and participation which is truly exciting. While the organization I volunteer with has always provided in-person interpreters for sessions should they be needed, the virtual world is a new front for them. Some of their sessions will be live using a virtual events platform and some are pre-recorded. The organization obviously wants to be as inclusive as possible while providing a great experience and meeting ADA requirements. The event is a little over a week away and they have an attendee requesting accommodations. So PCMA friends, **what have you done for your virtual events?**

- Should they consider a Professional Captionist?
- Use auto-captioning?
- Auto-transcription?
- Caption and interpret?
- Did you do it for all sessions?
- What are you providing afterward?
- How have you used the above for pre-recorded versus live?
- What are they not thinking about?

### And do you have any recommended companies?

Anastasia Courtney, Assistant Director, Convention & Events with the Modern Language Association in New York offered this advice: See what your platform can support. Some, like Zoom, have built-in captioning options, so your captioner can use the built-in option. Other platforms don't have that ability, so you may need to direct those who need captions to a separate link, or have a captioner share their screen to show the captions, etc. Those auto-captioning options are very error-prone. If you're making the effort to caption, I'd recommend using a professional.

Transcription is also error prone. Be prepared to spend time correcting it. Since that's after the event, you have a little leeway with timing.

We've hired ASL interpreters through SLR - we've used them at our in-person conventions for years and they've also done our digital ones. They also have professional captioners.

### Additional companies recommended by others included:

#### REV

<https://www.rev.com/>

Turnaround time was very fast and cost reasonable according to Michele Byers, CAE, CMP, Managing Director, Education and Management Services with American College of Emergency Physicians.

#### OTTER.AI

<https://otter.ai/login>

for teams with Zoom platform was the choice of Karen Verhey, Director of Operations and Events with Society for College and University Planning out of Ann Arbor MI "It provided real time live transcription which we will edit and post as a resource with the recordings. It worked really well and the pricing was very reasonable."

#### ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION SERVICES (ACS)

[www.ACSCaptions.com](http://www.ACSCaptions.com)

was recommended by Erica Allen, Director of Events and Meetings with Higher Education User Group out of AZ. "The attendees who requested ADA service particularly closed captioning (CC), we asked them to fill out their agenda to let us know what sessions they plan on attending at least a few weeks before so we can schedule an interpreter appropriately. "

#### SPEAKER AGREEMENTS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

The sharing of resources on Catalyst continued in a thread started by Angela Bedell, CAE with ABC Communities who posted "I'm looking for advice, samples or war stories that might be helpful in crafting speaker agreements for digital courses. Some of the courses are organization-owned, and some are more "Conference-type" with idea sharing of the speaker's own ideas. In other words, the intellectual property is different. If you have agreements or advice, I'd love to hear or see them".

Hiwot Lemma, DES, Manager, Hotel & Meeting Services with Edison Electric Institute in Washington, DC offered her Production Release and Speaker Agreement documents as a starting point. Both sample documents can be accessed and downloaded by logging into PCMA Catalyst and using the search to access this thread.

And from the opposite coast, Raime Merriman, Marketing VP with Hubb in Vancouver, WA shared their blog post on [How to Create Effective Speaker Agreements](#), which includes examples you can download.

#### SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Check Catalyst not only when you need to crowd source solutions for your own events, but also to offer your expertise to fellow event professionals. Katie Hathaway, CMP, Meetings Manager with Association for Organ Procurement Organizations awaits your reply to her recent post "Has anyone surveyed their members to determine whether they would participate in a live person event? If so, do you have sample questions you would share?"

Login to your PCMA account to share your experience and join the conversation! <https://catalyst.pcma.org/home>

**Kristen Parker**, CASE Director of Eastern Regional Sales  
*Visit Austin*

## TOGETHER AGAIN EXPO 2020

On Friday, July 24, 2020, Together Again Expo 2020 came together for a one-day event at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL. Normally, we would not be addressing an expo such as this, however, this was an unprecedented event during unprecedented times. COVID 19 has decimated the Hospitality Industry including the Expo Industry, and the efforts to bring together live attendees in this virtual world we are now living in was ambitious to say the least.

This event was produced and presented by Alliance Nationwide Exposition whose President is Mark Yuska. The Together Again Expo featured a robust lineup of industry experts and welcomed 1,400 live industry professionals, 8,225 virtual attendees and 250 exhibitors.

The main goal of this event was an effort to showcase new strategies and tools to navigate how live events can be hosted safely and responsibly during this difficult year.

### Multiple best practices were put in place including:

**Planning** - State, local, and venue recovery requirements and GBAC protocols

**Pre-Event** - High frequency communication

**Temperature Screening** - Medical staff screening

**Thermal Scanning** - Daily identifier

**Pre-Function** - Masks required, no handshake, sanitizing stations

**Registration** - Express/Touchless registration technology, scan-and-go badge pickup

**Back of House** - Carrier/POV driver temp check, PPE for all staff

**Exhibit Space** - Temperature screening, door monitors, entrance and exit only doors, one way and wider aisles

Quoted in the Orange County Government newsletter,

***“The Together Again Expo has successfully brought theory into practice; and shown how we can come together again to do business,”***



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**Lounges** - Plexi partitions, seating orientation

**Education Sessions** - Socially distanced seating, seat sanitizing

**Food and Beverage** - Food safety protocol, limited seats per round, new processes for food packaging and distribution at foodservice and retail outlets

**Supplier Offerings** - PPE, shields, masks, cleaning services, hand sanitizers, air scrubbers

Alliance Nationwide Exposition CEO Mark Yuska.

***“Touching on themes of safety, recovery and resiliency, we are proud to have connected our industry at this defining moment in history.”***

Rosa Mendoza-Friedheim, Vice President, Global Accounts  
ConferenceDirect

## STAR OF THE QUARTER!

Congratulations goes to **MELISSA PETICOLAS** from the Professional Development Committee who is the winner of our Capital Chapter Q2 Star Award! Thank you for your above and beyond dedication and time commitment to executing the Chapter's first virtual Spark event!



### THE OTHER WELL-DESERVING NOMINEES WERE:

**Marilyn Atchue-Zuill** - Communications Committee

**Shanae Mcfadden, CMP** – Marketing Committee

**A huge thank you to each of you for helping make the Capital Chapter UNMISSABLE!**

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