

Standing Still to Move Forward

Normally, this article would provide an overview of the incoming president's thoughts for the coming year. We are obviously not in normal times! As a result of the pandemic, the PCMA Capital Chapter took the unprecedented steps to pass a temporary by-laws amendment to extend the leadership terms of the current Board of Directors and committee leadership by one year.

A lot of thought was put into this decision and it was ultimately decided the Chapter should move forward to provide much needed stability as we face uncertainty in when we will be able to come together again, as well as ensuring financial stability in these challenging times.

"Standing still" represents a meaningful look inwards, prioritizing what is important and what will be impactful for the journey ahead. Here are some thoughts from our "incoming" and "current" president, John Rubsamen and president-elect, Marcus Eng as we "stand still" to "move forward."

"What do you see as the biggest challenges moving forward to next year?"

Marcus: There are certainly financial challenges as we move forward during a time where there is still uncertainty on when we can safely meet face-to-face again. As we plan for more virtual events in the first half of next year, we will be challenged to create meaningful and fun networking events but I have every confidence that together with our creative volunteers, we will find a way!

John: It will be critical for the Chapter to remain agile and creative in order to develop new revenue streams and update existing ones. It will also be critical for us to present timely content that helps our members plan and design for the future of our industry. Predicting even medium range future needs can be challenging, but there is a huge opportunity for us to shape the future of business events and provide new opportunities and growth.

"Have there been rewarding moments from this past year you would like to share?"

Marcus: What struck me was the fact that so many people continued to contribute so much time to the Chapter despite dealing with furloughs, job loss and uncertain times. It says a lot about what the Chapter means to people.

John: Agreed! We had already set out with some major changes in our education formats, and I am in awe of how our committees pulled together to meet the needs of members, kept in line with planned innovations, and added new programming in a matter of a few weeks! Our volunteers nearly doubled the amount of content provided by the Chapter to ensure information was timely and accessible. Amazing work! The committee reports within this issue will give you more details on these incredible accomplishments.

John Rubsamen, Board of Directors
President

Marcus Eng, CMP, Board of Directors,
President-Elect



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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CAPITAL CHAPTER | capital@pcma.org

THE CHATTER | pcma.capital.comm@gmail.com

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

Additional Q&A with John and Marcus Looking Ahead to 2021

"What will Convening Leaders be like next year?"

Marcus: Well, PCMA has announced that it will be a hybrid, omnichannel event. It also will rely heavily on regional engagement, whether live, virtual or hybrid. While I'm sad we won't have a traditional Convening Leaders, I'm excited to see how it's executed and the takeaways I can use for my association's meetings.

John: Another exciting aspect will be the engagement on the Chapter level. We are working on how our Chapter Reception is developed (virtually) and how we can provide new ways to engage during the conference and in partnership with our fellow chapters and HQ. I'm excited for the possibilities!

"Given the extension of leadership terms, how can I get involved with the Chapter?"

Marcus: While the Chapter has decided to extend leadership terms by 1 year, it's important to know there are always opportunities for people interested in joining a committee. There are a variety of opportunities ranging from championing an event to more finite micro-volunteer tasks.

John: Most certainly, now and in the future, we will need to engage our members to ensure fresh ideas, innovation, and growth. Even at the smallest level of task, every volunteer makes a difference in the success of the Chapter. If there is a will, we will always have a way to engage in building our future. It is an exciting and creative time to volunteer and be a part of building the future.

John Rubsamen, Board of Directors
President

Marcus Eng, CMP, Board of Directors,
President-Elect



Community Services Committee

COVID-19 cannot keep this group of 34 passionate people from supporting our community! Despite our first few months of events being cancelled, the committee rallied to bring virtual CSR activations to our Spark events.

For the **Q2 Spark event in June**, the committee coordinated virtual notes of encouragement and thanks to our front-line health care workers in five area hospitals. For the Q3 Spark event in August, championed by Emily Parsons, the committee supported **Art with a Heart**. The Capital Chapter came together to donate enough items from the Amazon Wish List to build **150 HEART kits** for underserved youth in the Baltimore area.

In **August and September**, Amy Pettigrew championed Joyful Bagging events with **Martha's Table**, our first in-person event since COVID-19 changed our world, showing that in-person connection is so important and that it can be done safely. During each of these two sessions, 20 PCMA Capital Chapter volunteers spent a total of six hours bagging over **700 bags of groceries** for those in need as well as packaging 200 meals to be distributed to the homeless community throughout DC. In October, Regina Rink championed our Q4 Spark CSR activation, where we supported Bright Beginnings, a child development center for homeless children in Southeast DC, in partnership with the Junior

League. Members can choose from a number of items on the Bright Beginnings Wish List to support these children and their families.

In **November**, Donna Del Gallo led the charge for our Meeting Industry **Blood Drive** in partnership with the American Red Cross, our first-ever event promoted across the DMV area meeting industry organizations through the new CHAMPS alliance. This event would not have been possible without the support of the Madison Hotel for their generosity of donating the venue even when the property had not yet confirmed reopening dates. The work does not end there! The Community Services Committee, with Lisa Luks leading the charge, is busy planning for a December adopt-a-family program over the holidays. Stayed tuned for more information.

A huge shout out to this amazing committee who worked so tirelessly to continue to support our DMV communities! We are very proud of this amazing group of caring and generous members!

Chair - Cheri Fairchild, CMP Associate Director of Sales In-Market East
Caesars Entertainment

Co-Chair - Emily Parsons, Meetings Coordinator
National Association of Attorneys General

Sponsorship Committee

The new decade began with an amazing opening reception at the Hilton San Francisco Union Square during Convening Leaders 2020 and was followed by another successful **Mix 'N Bowl** at Pinstripes before COVID-19 changed our world. As meetings were canceled or changed to virtual, the Sponsorship Committee quickly realized we needed to re-create our Partnership Prospectus to find new sponsors, offer options at lower prices, and find platforms for our virtual programs.

With much creativity and flexibility, we were still able to find sponsors and are incredibly grateful to the following partners: CadmiumCD, Choose Chicago, Gaylord Palms Resort, Events DC, EventEQ, Experience Scottsdale, Georgia World Congress Center, PMSI, Tourism Vancouver, Visit Detroit, Visit Norfolk, and Visit Phoenix. We want to provide special recognition to our Annual Sponsors who include EPNAC, Experience Kissimmee, Freeman, Hilton San Francisco Union Square, and Performedia. We would not be able to offer our incredible chapter programs without the support of our sponsors and I ask you to acknowledge their sponsorship the next time you see one of our partners.

We are optimistic we will be having hybrid programs next year and are excited to safely see everyone. If you would like to promote your hotel, destination, or product to the 1,600 business events professionals in the DC area, please contact **Regina Rink**, Sponsorship Chair, at rrink@destinationtoronto.com. We have many benefits for both in-person and virtual meetings and would love to speak to you.

Chair - Regina Rink, CASE, Sales Director - US In Market, DC & Northeast
Destination Toronto



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Communications Committee

We could not have been successful our first year at the helm of the Capital Chapter's newsletter, The Chatter, without the help of our passionate and dedicated volunteers. In keeping with Chapter leadership's 2020 vision, our goal was to tell the story of our chapter members while providing valuable information to make The Chatter UNMISSABLE. Who would have guessed just two issues into the year, the definition of "valuable content" would change so dramatically!

Our committee members rose to the occasion, writing pandemic-relevant articles ranging from cancellation lessons learned to the future of in-person events. Equally important topics covered diversity and inclusion, along with tips for teleworking and job searching. Thankfully, we inherited some great regular features such as Members and Their Pets guaranteed to provide a much-needed bright spot in our readers' days.

Special thanks to Stacey Knoppel, who volunteered to author what was to be a series of articles on venue safety and security. As everyone's interpretation of safety and security changed drastically in the wake of COVID19, Stacey didn't miss a beat providing helpful information on GBAC accreditation and new sanitation protocols.

With members working from home and COVID-19 information constantly changing, the shelf-life of our article content had shortened, requiring us to re-evaluate the Chatter's distribution process. Shifting from printing and mailing to e-mail delivery, not only solved the speed to market issue, it also provided a much-needed cost savings.

One thing that did NOT change in 2020 was the great collaboration among our chapter committees. The Sponsorship Committee managed to keep Ads appearing in the Chatter. The Government Relations/Advocacy Committee kept us supplied with current industry information in their regular feature and the Professional Development Committee provided insightful recaps on planning and execution of their virtual Spark events.

Looking ahead to 2021, we would love to hear from YOU! Let us know what you would like to read about or share your expertise with other members by writing an article for one of next year's Chatter issues.

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

Co-Chair - **Rosa Mendoza-Friedheim**, CASE, CDMP,
Vice President of Global Accounts
ConferenceDirect

Marketing Committee - The Virtual Beat Goes On!

In 2020, we continued the trend of growing the social media presence of the **#PCMACC** with followers, more likes and more posts!



• **1,359 Facebook** followers and **1,361 Facebook likes!** Over 61% more than last year!

• **1,858 tweets** which is over 231 more than last year and we are up to **1,334 twitter followers!**



from last year resulting in Instagram becoming our fastest growing platform in this category!

• Drum roll please...in late September we relaunched our PCMACC LinkedIn site with **157 total followers and 61 new followers**. In the last 30 days we have seen a 662% growth rate in followers including 231 Page Views (+126%) and 96 unique visitors (+220%).



In our second full year of **Instagram** we have **933 followers** which is a 67% growth in followers



With the onset of the chapter's strong pivot towards providing additional virtual programming and delivering engaging content to our members, the Marketing Committee has been as busy as ever in 2020! Not only have we experienced incredible growth and engagement across all our social media platforms, but we also have experienced success in the daily **#campaigns: #membermondays #tipstuesdays #wellnesswednesday #throwbackthursdays and #fantasticfridays**.

We also updated many of the social media graphics to promote the yearlong **#unmissable** campaign as well as using the graphics to continue to support our Star of the Quarter, Spark Events, Lunch & Learn programs, Community Service Events and all other chapter events. In 2020 we created 28 unique graphics to share with our content and we are just getting started!! We strive to elevate our **#PCMACC** community by providing relevant content to today's business event professionals and are focused on the continuous mindset to keep our **#PCMACC** family connected. Thank you all for your support and engagement in 2020. Keep engaging, interacting and posting on ALL our platforms as we prepare to achieve new personal and professional heights in 2021!

Chair - **Carson Edwards Jr.**, MBA, CASE, CDMP, Global Account Executive, Global Sales, US & Canada
Marriott Global Sales Organization

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How to Integrate Emotional Intelligence into your Diversity and Inclusion Culture



Daniel Goleman, the preeminent Emotional Intelligence author was asked if Emotional Intelligence is increasing in society, "I think that the number of inter-group wars that are going on, the inter-group hatred going on, the levels of familial abuse...indicators of emotions out of control, in dangerous ways, don't look that great."

This paints a stark picture for our society at a time during a pandemic when Emotional Intelligence is needed more than ever. Emotional Intelligence is not the first thing on someone's mind when dealing with race relations and inclusiveness. Yet, awareness of your emotions is deeply tied to unconscious bias and the ability to mitigate biases.

When negative emotions are heightened, employees may experience a fight or flight response to a given situation or conversation. According to Marjorie Derven, "Increasingly, we are working across cultures, and diverse team members—driven by changing demographics and globalization. These changes make Emotional Intelligence (EI) foundational for success. However, EI is not enough: we also need Diversity & Inclusion practices to become embedded into our organizations to maximize talent and marketplace opportunities."

Industry and organizational leaders must begin to integrate Emotional Intelligence into their Diversity and Inclusion practices, culture, and training within an organization to create lasting change and get inclusive values to "stick" in an organization.

Some of the ways that they can do this include:

- Incorporating Emotional Intelligence into Diversity and Inclusion training, and...
- Integrating Emotional Intelligence into practices such as inclusive hiring and diverse promotion policies.

What can you do to introduce Emotional Intelligence into your culture? First look at the methods you use to train employees on both Diversity & Inclusion and Emotional Intelligence—are they working? Are you integrating courses on both topics together or are they separate enough that employees are not making the connection? And finally, are you changing policies and procedures because of the insight gained from these courses? If the answer to some of these questions is "no," or the questions are leaving you blank, then perhaps it is time to revisit your training and understanding of Emotional Intelligence and Diversity and Inclusion.

|| **Christopher "CJ" Gross**, Founder/Chief Executive Officer
Ascension Worldwide

|| **Chris Morin**, MBA, Senior Director of Operations
Ascension Worldwide

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION TASK FORCE

At the end of 2019, the leadership of the Capital Chapter created a new Strategic Plan for 2020-2023. Two of the pillars that were identified as a high priority were Diversity and Inclusion. The board created the Diversity & Inclusion Task Force in the first quarter of 2020 and by March we had gathered a small, diverse, and thoughtful group of industry folks to form the first Capital Chapter Task Force.

THREE MAIN TASKS ARE OUTLINED BELOW TO ENFORCE OUR GOALS:

- Our first task was to create a **Diversity & Inclusion Mission Statement** that would form the foundation of our work as a task force and as a chapter. <https://capital.pcma.org/standalone-post/pcma-capital-chapter-diversity-inclusion-mission-statement/>.
- The second task was to create a **Code of Conduct** to ensure everyone's safety. http://cjmshesbpvzxs91spmwusc-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2020/08/Code-of-Conduct_2020.pdf.
- Lastly, we created **Best Practices** in five areas: Event Design, Marketing & Communications, Mentoring, Leadership, and Safe Q&A Space.

We want these Best Practices to be a resource not just for the Capital Chapter leadership, but also for our members. We partnered with the Professional Development Committee to create relevant and important content for the 4th Quarter Spark Event. (*Read the full event recap on Page 10*)

We recognize that diversity and inclusion is important to ensure everyone has a seat at the table. Our goal is to put policies in place that help us be a more diverse and inclusive business events community.

|| **Chair - Rebecca Ramsey**
Business Development Executive
EVENT EQ



Chapter Members and their Pets

Christina Childs rescued her puppy about four months ago. Initially, she wanted to adopt an older dog and give a good home to one who had fewer chances of being adopted. However, she also has a six-year old cat, Bing Clawsby, and didn't want to overwhelm him. When talking with her adoption coordinator, it was suggested she get a puppy since that wouldn't be intimidating for Bing – might be a little annoying at first, ha – but a puppy was the best way to go.

Soon Christina would hear of a dog being rescued from Puerto Rico about to give birth. This was Christina's opportunity to adopt! She jumped at the chance and as luck would have it, the available pup turned out to be the one Christina had her eye on all along! She named her Rosa Barks and brought her home at just seven weeks old.

Christina and her partner Bryce did all their research and were prepared to introduce Rosa and Bing in the best way possible. Once they brought Rosa home, Bing looked at her and was not impressed. Since pup and kitty didn't seem nervous or concerned, Bryce put Rosa down on the floor and she and Bing sniffed each other without issue. Two days later, they started playing and have been having a blast ever since. Wherever Bing is hanging out, that's where Rosa can be found. Her dog beds are strategically placed near Bing's cat trees and favorite spots. He's soothing to her and they are completely adorable together.

Rosa loves everyone and everything; and goes everywhere including Christina's yoga class. In fact, the day I spoke with Christina she was contemplating canceling her dinner plans because of forecasted rain – can't be outside, can't bring Rosa.

Rosa's sweet nature and heart of gold also come with a scrappy side. She has no fear at the dog park, taking on the big dogs without hesitation! Her tale is a happy one and she gives as much love as she receives from her two-legged and four-legged family members.



Christina Childs, CMP, Director of Education & Special Events
Association of Air Medical Services/The MedEvac Foundation International



Lauren Kramer adopted a Havanese mix after he was taken to a shelter in West Virginia by his previous owner for being too energetic.

Lauren had been registered with Homeward Trails animal rescue for some time, but when fellow Chapter member Christina Childs posted her new beagle pup Rosa Barks' photo, she felt ready and decided it was time to take action and adopt her first-ever pet.

Christina connected Lauren with her adoption coordinators and within 48 hours, she was paired with her dog, Mojo. He was ten months old at the time and just celebrated his first birthday on September 16th. Happy Birthday Mojo!

Lauren and Mojo walk many miles through Old Town Alexandria every day and are currently in training together. Lauren's thrilled that so many pets are being adopted (the bright spot in this COVID-19 pandemic for certain). To all of the Capital Chapter pet parents out there, if you'd like to meet up and walk in Old Town, Lauren and Mojo would love to have you join them, especially Mojo who will greet you with great enthusiasm!

Lauren Kramer, CAE, CEO, Virtual Strategist & Facilitator
Meeting Priorities



With this being the last Chatter issue of the year, I'd like to wrap up by saying what a joy it's been getting to know Chapter members and hearing their pet stories through this feature.

These stories, much like our beloved furry family members, have provided a much needed and wonderful source of light from the tumultuous times we're all experiencing.

I particularly enjoyed learning of Christina's and Lauren's adoption stories because I, too, have adopted from Homeward Trails (HT). In fact, I can't imagine life without my cats Ziva and Xena and have HT to thank. As we like to say at my place, pets truly make a house a home.

Collectively, we'd like to give a special shout out to all the animal rescue groups out there -- with a super special kudos to Homeward Trails. HT is doing amazing work every single day to save animals who may not have a chance otherwise, warming the hearts of adopters and pets all around DC, Maryland, and Virginia. In 2019, HT rescued 903 cats and 2,213 dogs.

Please check them out at
www.homewardtrails.org.



Amanda Clark, CMP

Emerging Professionals Committee

The aftermath of COVID-19 has left many of our industry colleagues looking for jobs and needing career advice. In addition, it has left our student members wondering if they have made the right career choice.

The Emerging Professionals Committee (EPC) acknowledges that now more than ever, our community needs us, and we are here to answer the call. We have created "Generation Meet", a one-on-one peer career coaching program to support our industry colleagues in need of updating their skills and/or professional presence in the marketplace.

In addition, the EPC has been hosting a series of virtual classrooms for hospitality students at various universities to assure them that this is still the BEST industry to work in. These classrooms have had panels filled with industry experts representing every area within the hospitality and tourism arena. These experts have shared their experiences and knowledge on how to operate in the current climate and prepare for a post-COVID-19 environment by seeking opportunities to evolve in this new normal. We have had huge success with our virtual classrooms and are proud of the impact that we have made in the lives of the students, because they are our future.

EPC welcomes the support of our members. If you would like to participate in our Generation Meet program by becoming a peer coach or peer trainee, we need your help and/or welcome

the opportunity to serve you. Click this link to the [application](#) to participate in Generation Meet. If you would like to volunteer to be on the expert panel for the virtual classrooms or have a college/university you believe would benefit from the virtual classroom, please contact **Malene Ward** at malene@phoenixplanninggroup.com.

The EPC committee would like to thank the following panelists for kicking off a successful Fall 2020 Virtual Classroom Visit Program:

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY – SEPTEMBER 2020

- **Malene Ward**, CMP, CEM, DES (Moderator) - Founder, *Phoenix Planning Group, LLC*
- **Jessica Baker** – Senior Sales Executive, *Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center*
- **Dion James-Zanfordino** – Regional Sales Executive, *Greater Ft. Fort Lauderdale CVB*
- **Valerie Sumner** – Principal, VRS Meetings & Events
- **Jennifer Vaseleck**, CMP – Meeting and Event Manager, *Experient*

VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY – SEPTEMBER 2020

- **Malene Ward**, CMP, CEM, DES (Moderator) – Founder, *Phoenix Planning Group, LLC*
- **Tyra Dyson**, CMP – Manager Event Logistics, *Association for Professionals in Infection Control & Epidemiology (APIC)*
- **Eric Kincaid** - National Account Director, *HMCC, Destination DC*
- **B. Murphy**, CEM – Senior National Sales Manager, *Fern Exposition Services*
- **Travis Peterson** - Senior Account Executive, *US Account Sales, Marriott International*
- **Jose Ringgold** - National Account Manager, *Projection*
- **Connie Samuels**, CMP – Senior Meeting Planner, *Institute of Scrap Recycling Industry*

Chair - **Eric Kincaid**, National Account Director, *HMCC Destination DC*



The graphic features a yellow background with a pattern of hexagons. At the top, the word "hive." is written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below this, the text "Sign up for a live demo of Event EQ's new virtual event environment!" is displayed in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. At the bottom, a dark blue horizontal bar contains the text "For more info, email rebecca.ramsey@eventeq.com" in a white sans-serif font.

Professional Development Committee

2020 kicked off with a theme of "Unmissable" content for the PCMA Capital Chapter. The Professional Development Committee (PDC) led this call to action with the development of cutting-edge educational content on event design, technology, leadership, and more that would engage and excite chapter members. In March, everything changed when the global pandemic brought our plan of face-to-face events to a standstill. Like many of our members had to do with their own events, we had to redesign chapter programming with new content to stay relevant and adapt our events to a virtual platform since we were unable to meet in person. PDC quickly went from the Professional Development Committee to the Pivot and Disrupt Committee, and we have been busy doing just that all year!

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, PDC has executed three virtual Spark half-day programs to help keep our members up to date and connected. Our **June Spark program** was themed **Bouncing Back**, with a program focused on our chapter coming together to recover, reconnect, and stay resilient. We incorporated elements like a yoga break and a mixology lesson in our closing reception to keep the event fun and focused.

Our **August Spark program** was themed **Power Up – Your Personal Guide to Professional Growth**. This event was all about personal development and helping members focus on themselves during this challenging time, including topics such as leadership skill development, resume and LinkedIn profile enhancement, public speaking tips, and mentorship. We ended the day with a fun and lighthearted round of The Interesting Conversation Game.

Finally, our **October Spark program** focused on important themes **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Not Just a Talking Point!**

This event was broadcast live from the Walter E. Washington Convention Center to a virtual audience with some behind the scenes looks at what hybrid events may look like in 2021. The program covered having difficult conversations around race and unconscious bias including a hands-on workshop to develop the skills and language to mitigate biases. Our committee even got to take part in our first site visit of the year and had a small group of volunteers safely convene face-to-face to execute the production from the convention center.

In addition to our Spark programming, PDC brought back and revamped our **Lunch and Learn** program in April. Our chapter members had a desire to gather, and meeting over lunch on Zoom was the perfect way to connect, reflect, and learn together. PDC has since executed ten Lunch and Learns on a variety of topics including virtual events, social selling, advocating for our industry, self-care, and more. With the interactive nature and relevant content, these programs have seen upwards of 250 attendees meeting virtually and have been a great tool to keep members engaged and connected from afar.

While the global pandemic ensured that we could not meet face-to-face, the chapter has stayed resilient and connected through our education offerings, and PDC is so proud to have led this effort. We cannot wait to see what 2021 has in store!

Chair - Leah Lewis, Director of Meetings,
American Gear Manufacturers Association

STAR OF THE QUARTER!

Congratulations goes to **DANIELLE KING** from the Professional Development Committee who is the winner of our Capital Chapter Q4 Star Award! Thank you for your leadership championing the Spark 3 virtual platform and tackling the largest number of sessions the chapter has presented at a Spark program with an incredibly short turnaround time.

THE OTHER WELL-DESERVING NOMINEES WERE:

Marilyn Atchue-Zuill - Communications Committee

Amy Pettigrew – Community Services Committee

Melinda Colón – Membership Committee

Trudy Singh – Membership Committee

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



PCMA Capital Chapter Spark 4 Recap

When Spark 4 ended, I got in my car to drive home. I was on a high. It was an afternoon of aha moments, deep reflection, and something totally unexpected...a chance to advance my virtual meeting skills. That last revelation is a topic for the next Chatter issue.

I turned on the radio and heard Michael Jackson singing:

*It's a turf war on a global scale
I'd rather hear both sides of the tale
See, it's not about races
Just places, faces
Where your blood comes from
Is where your space is
I've seen the bright get duller
I'm not going to spend my life being a color*

These are the lyrics from his 1991 song Black or White. Michael was commenting on racism and his willingness to hear what others of differing opinions had to say. But, in the long run, the color of one's skin should have nothing to do with anything. It has everything to do with one's mindset.

And where does one's mindset come from? According to our keynote speaker, CJ Gross with Ascension Worldwide, he referred to this as our Unconscious Bias. These are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness... our education, how we were raised, the neighborhoods we grew up in and the people we hung out with. Once we recognize this, there are things we can do to counteract these unconscious biases.

By recognizing that we all have unconscious biases, we can counteract them as long as we don't allow them to become implicit or conscious biases. We need to **blind ourselves** by not looking at a person's hair, their weight or color of their skin – we can't make decisions based on arbitrary criteria because if we do, especially in the work place, we may be missing out on ideas, thoughts, and perspectives that advance our objectives. **Be conscious.** Each step of the way ask yourself what was influencing your decision. **Educate yourself.** Continue to learn about history, other people's backgrounds, and societal influences. **We may never do away with our biases, but we certainly can control them.**

This was the objective of the small group discussions CJ had us participate in. Since I was working with CJ to get him virtually into many of the breakouts, I heard an array of stories from attendees who recognized what their biases were and how they were going to actively work to overcome them.

One way to overcome them is by educating ourselves and listening to other people's struggles. Greg O'Dell and Deirdre Clemmons offered a glimpse of what those struggles are like. What is it genuinely like to be black not just in America but in the meetings industry? I must admit that I have a great deal of respect for both. Dee happens to be a personal friend and Greg was my national board liaison when I was president of the Chapter. He served as a mentor to me and Dee is someone whose trajectory in her association is to be admired. They both had to work doubly hard to prove that they earned the right to be in the positions they've attained.

One of the most impactful moments of the day was listening to those four intelligent, sassy and insightful women from three of the four historically black sororities that helped make history by supporting the efforts of the suffragette movement to grant women (white women) the right to vote 100 years ago. Knowing that it would continue to take more than a decade for women of color to have that right, they fought hard and long and don't take voting for granted. Their message? Exercise your right to vote by studying the issues. Research the candidates and make an impact by voting in all elections. As a secondary message – relationship building is one of the most important parts of our industry. We will come back to face-to-face meetings but in the meantime, continue to build relationships – words for all aspects of our lives.

So, what is our call to action you ask? Lots of them.

Be respectful. Be authentic. Be the solution.

Hopefully, you participated in the video challenge, not because there was a prize involved, but because all humans deserve equal rights. Make sure that diversity, inclusion, and equity are no longer talking points. Listen to Michael's song and heed his words – I'm not going to spend my life being a color. No one should.

Annette M. Suriani, CMP, DES, Business Event Strategist
AMS Meetings Solutions




Alpha Kappa Alpha – International President
Dr. Glenda Baskin Glover, Ph.D., JD, CPA,

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority – National President & CEO
Beverly Evans Smith

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First Glimpse of Live Events

Our hotels and convention centers have been working diligently to create infrastructure that welcomes meetings back safely. In a recent webinar, US Travel Association's VP of Industry Relations, Angie Briggs, relayed that meetings and conventions spending from March through August was down 86% industry-wide compared to this time last year, representing a loss of 64 billion dollars. Our industry's top priority is identifying a viable path forward.

A survey of 60 member cities of Washington DC's CVB Reps demonstrated that 92% were open and hosting meetings at limited capacity with successful results. What is it like to host a live face-to-face event? The Chatter's Mark Harvey sat down with the team of HR Florida State Council, a SHRM affiliate, to understand some of the key lessons learned this past September at the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center.

What was one of the biggest successes? "Being able to have it!" 500 attendees in-person and 700 online made up [HR Florida](#), which usually welcomes 2,500 attendees. In the pre-planning stages, Conference Chair, Troy Clements, cited that over-communication and the need to exercise patience was key. Long-term vendors that manage the conference are working at limited capacities due to the devastating layoffs our industry has endured. General contractors' warehouses are often not staffed at pre-pandemic levels, and compassion needs to be a part of the new culture as event professionals navigate through varied circumstances. With many association offices being closed, the new normal included having freight picked up at the home of Event Manager, Terri Greene.

Utilizing social media in the promotion of the conference to present pictures of on-site room sets and safety measures was imperative for attendees to visualize a safe meeting in advance. The attendees needed to also understand their role in creating a safe environment. Wearing a mask was not a choice; it was a requirement and a county mandate.

For additional safety, a COVID-19 testing location was available, and a Safety Officer was available at all times and known to all attendees. Both the meetings team and hotel staff were aware of the emergency plan so that immediate action would activate if there was a concern. The on-site team and speakers were temperature-tested daily, and thermometers were available for attendees if needed. One-way aisle markers in expo aisles, floor markers, and island booths helped the expo floor flow safely.

Building in additional time to every function of the conference gave the team flexibility to address unforeseen challenges. Speakers were required to provide triple the amount of time in comparison to previous years in order to achieve objectives of a hybrid event offering both in-person and virtual content. A lesson

was learned when one of the speakers expressed concern with being on-site, just days before the conference began. Looking ahead, the team will ensure that all key components of the program are in place further out on the timeline. As we all know, the ability to change direction quickly is a crucial part of our current world, so advanced preparation is important now more than ever.

HR Florida is known for the exceptional culture of their conference, and the meetings team did everything in their power to duplicate the same feel participants have come to expect over the years. The look and atmosphere of the conference were maintained while attendees enjoyed excellent education, a 5K run and, of course, entertainment. The difference: mandatory masks and physical distancing throughout the conference.

At our core, business event strategists are trained to manage the unforeseen in any pre-, post-, and on-site situation. Behind the scenes, magic happens so attendees only experience a flawless event. In the end, the highlight of HR Florida? Over 500 attendees, and no reported COVID-19 cases. With the proper safety certifications, physical distancing, and appropriate capacities in place at our hotels and centers, meetings can move forward.

Enjoy a short video on [HR Florida's The Road Back](#).

Lynn Whitehead, National Sales Director, Citywide Sales
San Diego Tourism Authority

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



Government Relations & Advocacy Committee

The Government Relations & Advocacy Committee eagerly anticipated hosting the first Spark event of 2020, Government Meetings Industry Day (GMID) at the Ronald Reagan Building.

All signs pointed to a record turnout for both the education sessions and visits to Capitol Hill. Then COVID-19 struck. We made the difficult decision to cancel GMID and participated in a virtual meeting on April 14 hosted by PCMA Canada and other industry groups.

As COVID-19 wreaked havoc on our industry, the committee decided to align our legislative efforts with larger industry advocates such as ASAE, US Travel, IAEE, etc. We served as amplifiers of their important legislative asks, including:

- [Securing Paycheck Protection Act \(PPP\) for 501\(c\)\(6\) organizations and Destination Management Organizations](#)
- [Pandemic Risk Insurance Act of 2020](#)
- [Small Business Disaster Loan Enhancement Act](#)

The committee stayed true to its goal of encouraging the chapter members to get out to vote for the November 2020 election. In September, the Government Relations and Advocacy and Marketing Committees joined forces to produce a twice-weekly social media campaign about voter registration, early voting, etc. The committee also provided timely educational content for the chapter this year including:

- **July Lunch and Learn: The Power of Advocacy-** committee leaders shared the latest legislative issues facing our industry, as well as tips for personal advocacy.
- **Q3 Spark: Power Mapping-** The moderator showed how to use power mapping as a tool to advocate for issues both in politics and personally.
- **Q4 Spark: The Suffragette Movement-** An Intimate Conversation on African American Sororities and Their Legacies - The chapter learned the rich history of African American Sororities' contributions to voting rights and American history.

Although it was not the year that we anticipated, the Government Relations and Advocacy Committee leveraged the power of the chapter's membership to amplify important legislative issues that affected our entire industry. Thank you to the committee for your service. We are looking forward to serving the chapter again in 2021.

Chair - Christine Frye, Director of Events
NTP Events

Co-Chair - Lisa French, Senior Sales Manager
Hilton Cleveland Downtown

Membership Committee

Each year, the Membership Committee is responsible for the recognition, recruitment, and retention of our members as well as the production of our annual chapter reception at Convening Leaders, our annual Mix 'N Bowl, the annual joint MPI Potomac and PCMA Capital Chapter Networking Reception and our annual end of year event honoring the chapter's achievements, its members and volunteers.

The Membership Committee is made up of 29 industry professionals from both the event professional and supplier community who volunteer on various teams within our committee.

Our Recognition Team, spearheaded by Marilyn Atchue-Zuill, recognized our chapter members by sending e-birthday cards on their special day as well as sending e-anniversary cards to members celebrating their 5/10/15/20/25+ years of membership with PCMA. A special shout out of sincere appreciation to Melinda Colon and Trudy Singh who have partnered with Marilyn on these efforts year after year. Their commitment to our chapter's members is unwavering.

Our Outreach Team, spearheaded by Sue Stemley, reached out to the first-time, new and non-members who attended the chapter's monthly and quarterly events. In addition, this team personally contacted over 200 members, ensuring that PCMA headquarters had each of these members' up to date details thus guaranteeing we all remain connected.

Our Networking Champions, Lee Callicutt and Damara Gomez partnered together in welcoming 643 guests to our annual reception hosted during Convening Leaders 2020. And, just a few short weeks after our return from Convening Leaders, Annette Suriani and Lauren Chelf welcomed 305 members to our annual Mix 'N Bowl event.

We sincerely appreciate the consideration, effort, and time each of our committee members extend to our chapter and its 1,642 members. All of us look forward to welcoming you to our final event of the year, U-Night: Honoring PCMA Capital Chapter's 2020 Achievements, its Members, and its Volunteers, and wish you continued happiness and health.

Chair - Christine Faiman, CMP, Global Account Executive,
Global Sales Organization
Marriott International

Co-Chair - Laurie Tritsch Hawes, CMP, Owner
The Hawes Group, LLC

Where Has Your Mask Been?

The hospitality industry was undoubtedly one of the first and hardest hit industries affected by COVID-19. In fact, one article has us at 68.89% job loss or reduction while the restaurant industry follows close behind at 63.83%. Yet, the "Hospitality" Industry is just that, hospitable. We are by nature social animals and always will be. As soon as it's deemed safe, our industry will be lining up to get back to face-to-face meetings. Some already are.

For those of us who have ventured out, here's what's in place to keep us safe and feel good about meeting again.

Jessica Smith and Laurie Hawes took to the skies with their masks. Both found terminals were devoid of normal crowds and even with one security line, getting through was easy. With many sanitation stations, calmer more organized lines, Jessica said the experience was quite nice. The downside was many food outlets were closed and bottled water and snack bags were the airline fare, so perhaps bring your own. When Jessica wiped down the space around her on the plane, no one thought her odd.

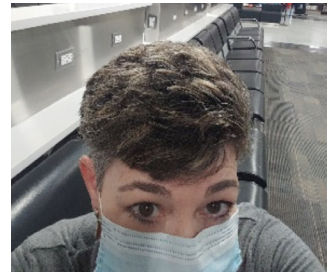
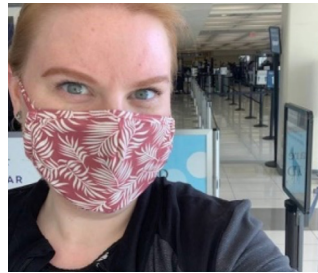
My mask and I went on site visits to Utah, Jessica to DC and Laurie to Colorado. Speaking for myself, the suppliers were thrilled to see me, and hotels are going out of their way to keep us safe. At front desks you're protected by plexiglass or touchless check-in options. Signs at elevators request one person or family at a time. Throughout, there are 6' (or half bobsled) distancing signs on the floor and frequent reminders to wear masks in all public spaces. In guestrooms, I found housekeeping services were upon request. Rooms are sanitized for your arrival and they don't want to risk contamination.

In some states, restaurants are reluctant to open. However, in Utah I was fortunate to find them serving indoors or out. In one such restaurant, the bar was closed so each seat was occupied by adorable, masked animals. What a great way to have fun with it!!

Now we need to get back to meetings! Massive conferences may take a bit longer; however, smaller meetings, with creativity, are here. My associate, Mandi Graziano, attended her client's meeting recently and it was a huge success. Sanitization of meeting rooms, meeting and banquet spaces set with social distancing and multiple spaces were used when one room would have sufficed in the past. In the end Mandi and her client made a "Pinky Promise" to not cancel any more meetings!

Here's wishing all of us the same.

Marilyn Atchue-Zuill, Global Account Director
Hospitality Performance Network Global



CADMIUM CD Offers Ideas on Providing Value

How can I provide value via virtual events?

Physical events provide a lot of value to all the stakeholders that attend. A big concern event professionals have in making the switch to digital events is how they are going to provide the same kind of value in a virtual environment. To get a detailed breakdown on how the options below work, [download the white paper](#).

Providing Value to Attendees Delivering Education

Delivering education to members always comes first. But another aspect of education at conferences comes in the form of engaging with content and networking with colleagues. Here are a few ways to do this:

- » [Note-Taking on Slides](#)
- » [Moderator Questions](#)
- » [Transcripts & Session Evaluations](#)

Creating Networking Opportunities

Part of the beauty of live physical events is running into an old colleague, striking up a conversation with a new contact, or grabbing a coffee with a group of like-minded people. While this can't be fully recreated online, there are options to make room for networking online.

- » [Activity Feed](#)
- » [Personal Meetings](#)

Providing Value to Speakers

Speakers are [your greatest asset](#) at an educational conference. They provide content to attendees (usually for free) and keep people interested and engaged in the latest community research. Keeping them organized and providing clear communication is the key to success. A speaker portal is a great way to do this and provides value in two specific ways:

- » [Upload Materials](#)
- » [Gain Feedback](#)

Providing Value to Exhibitors

It's important to also deliver value to your largest source of revenue — exhibitors and sponsors. These stakeholders typically want access to your attendees via conversations, advertising, and other forms of connection and brand

recognition. Here are a few ways you can deliver value at a virtual event via event tech for sponsors and exhibitors:

- » [Exhibitor Profiles & Contact Info](#)
- » [Brochures & PDFs](#)
- » [Interactive Floor Plan](#)
- » [Virtual Scavenger Hunts](#)
- » [Sponsored Sessions](#)

Want to learn how to use CadmiumCD for your virtual events?

Visit our [virtual events resources page](#), [download the white paper](#), or [schedule a demo](#) to see how the platform can work for your specific needs.

|| **Michael Doane**, Marketing Manager
CadmiumCD

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The next best thing to face-to-face is meeting online. That's why CadmiumCD built a virtual events platform that recreates all the best things about city-wide conferences and trade shows.

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COVID Can Go But These Can Stay

As we are all going through a challenging time, we gathered some of the more positive and uplifting things that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic that we think can stay. I asked 3,000+ of my closest friends in the Hospitality Facebook group, "COVID can go, but X can stay." Here is a compilation of their responses:

PEOPLE ARE MORE IN TOUCH WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

With people spending more time at home and enjoying a slower pace, many people have been able to reconnect with their loved ones and make new friends at home, socially distanced, and online.

The following can stay:

- Family Time
- Authentic Connections
- Community Spirit
- Community Facebook Groups to Share Best Practices & Gain Knowledge
- Home Cooking & Baking

CHANGES IN WORKING HABITS

Many workers have taken their office jobs home with them and are now fulfilling the same role from the safety of their home. Many would like to see these stay post COVID:

- Flexible Work Schedules
- Working from Home
- No or Less Traffic
- Hybrid and Virtual Meetings (to Supplement In-Person Meetings)
- Free or Discounted Rates for Professional Development
- Payment Plans to Attend Conferences
- No Heels
- No Makeup

SOCIALIZING AT A DISTANCE

It is strange that at a time when we are not allowed to physically see our friends, we are making more of an effort than ever to keep up with them. We have gotten very innovative to stay connected socially. Some of those aspects that can stay are:

- Zoom Happy Hours
- Instagram DJ Parties (DJ D-Nice, Verzuz, etc.)
- Outdoor Dining
- Less People at the Gym
- People Respecting Personal Space (i.e. keeping six feet distance)

EFFICIENT PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

As businesses have had to rethink operations, many trends have emerged that have made some interactions more efficient and would be welcome to stay around:

- Cancellations with No Penalties from Hotels and Airlines
- Airlines Not Selling the Middle Seat
- Contactless Transactions
- QR Code Menus
- To-Go Alcohol

A FORCED SLOW DOWN

We live in a world where it is all go, go, go. With so many places closed, and activities cancelled, it is giving us breathing space to slow down, catch our breath, and reflect on our dreams and goals. There have been some amazing podcasts, new businesses, and newfound talents. Inspired by the COVID quarantine and those can totally stay!

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





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PCMA Capital Chapter

Attn: Bea Tijerina
673 Potomac Station Dr. #801
Leesburg, VA 20176

Email: capital@pcma.org

ISSUE EDITORS

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

Rosa Mendoza-Friedheim, CASE, CDMP
Vice President of Global Accounts,
ConferenceDirect

CONTENT EDITORS

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

Brooke Hirsch
Senior Manager, CTA Events and Conferences

PRODUCTION EDITORS

Anna Genova
Senior Graphic Designer

CHATTER INFO



Capital Chapter of PCMA

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