

THE Chatter

January/February 2021

Capital Chapter's Theme for 2021: ROI - Recovery through Opportunity and Innovation

A CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT HIGHLIGHTS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

One might ask "How could Convening Leaders 2021 top last year's in-person, face to face event?" Like many of us, who vowed to leave 2020 behind in a cloud of dust, how did the 2021 planning committee set their course to curate engaging content for the virtual masses? Well, whatever their plan of attack, this year's meeting received resounding accolades from the many who attended.

The Capital Chapter kick-started their Convening Leaders experience by holding a reception which offered opening remarks from President, John Rubsamen and President-Elect, Marcus Eng and closed out with some light-hearted fun. Can you say BINGO, scavenger hunts and DJ Carson?!

Over the course of three days, the Convening Leaders platform provided content which enabled attendees to engage through a plethora of sessions embodying themes of resilience, re-skilling, innovation, Zen for the mind and fun i.e., Jeopardy and a Battle of the DJ's!

Keynote Speaker Thomas Friedman discussed mother nature and her uncanny ability to continually throw curveballs our way to see who's is the most adaptive. **Mother Nature asks some questions:** Are you humble, and did you respect my virus? Are you coordinated in your response to my virus? Have you built your response with chemistry, biology, and physics? As our doctors and scientists have said over and over, listen to the science. He also touched upon education and work, stating education is necessary. It is has become a life-long process. Gone are the days when you only attended elementary, high school and/or college. The work environment is now a place of continual education. Companies and places of education are joining forces to provide content for employees and students. When asked what his piece of advice was for everyone, he simply said "you have to like people and then they share." This relates to listening. If you are a good listener, two things happen, you will be amazed at what you learn and the respect you receive.

The Honorable Julia Gillard, former Prime Minister of Australia, spoke on numerous topics, but mentioned she sees the following trends: nationalism, an interest in the home front; debates about inequality have a new resurgence; science and expertise is back; government is back, people now see how important the role of government is; and how we think about work has changed, there is a newfound respect for certain careers. Her final call to action was to look at what was learned in 2020 and then change your business, change your world, have a cause.

Several sessions carried through on the theme of "co's": collaboration, collective decision making, cooperation and co-creation. In our present environment we have the unique opportunity to adopt many of these "co's" into our work lives and our personal lives. Remember that it's not "what's in it for me", it's "what's in it for we." **Innovation through collaboration will be the way our industry moves forward to co-create a better future for all of us.**

Torin Perez's session "Inclusive Leadership, Anti-Racism and You" offered up an eye-opening conversation on diversity, equity and inclusion. One of his comments centered around his friend, Frances' quote "to serve is to live." One need not say any more as we all must serve if we are to live.

HOLY COW! What is left to say? I hope you enjoyed this year's Convening Leaders. It was an unforgettable first of its kind virtual experience!

Thank you for the opportunity to learn and grow.

 Sue Stemley, CASE



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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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Cheers to a Better Year in 2021



To say that 2020 was a terrible year for our industry, and the world in general, is an understatement. So many of us were furloughed or laid off and those of us still working dealt with cancellations and moving meetings to later years. Regardless if you are a supplier or business event strategist, none of us seem to enjoy virtual meetings the same way we love live meetings and events.

Looking forward to 2021, I am filled with hope that the year will be better. Both the Pfizer & Moderna vaccines have been approved by the FDA and are being distributed. I eagerly await live events and being able to see, in person, the amazing people of our industry. Our Capital Chapter President, John Rubsamen, encapsulates it perfectly with our theme for 2021 -- "ROI: Recovery through Opportunity and Innovation". With opportunity and innovation top of mind, the Capital Chapter leadership has been busy planning and budgeting for 2021, diligently working to make it a year that is engaging with relevant, interesting content whether we are in-person or sitting in front of our computer at home. We kicked off with a very different kind of Convening Leaders and a virtual Capital Chapter Reception that had some fun networking activities.

Continuing the ROI theme, our volunteers brainstormed for new ways to engage members while increasing revenue. Someone suggested trivia and committee members tested out different games to play virtually in early December. On December 21 we held our first Trivia Night and I know we are looking forward to more of those in the first quarter of 2021! Thank you to Danielle Foisy for spearheading this new event, doing the research and figuring out how to execute it smoothly. One of the other ideas that came out of our brainstorming session was to create a PCMA Capital Chapter cookbook. Check out [Page 7](#) for more information and the call for recipes! Thanks to Vicki Johnson for taking on this huge project. I can't wait to buy my copy and maybe even contribute.

Rebecca Ramsey, Board of Directors
Treasurer

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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

We've Pivoted So Much My Head is Spinning

A Behind the Scenes Look at the Making of Spark 4

We are all so happy that 2020 is over and a new year has begun. As I start this article, I can't help but think of the words John Lennon wrote in Happy Xmas (War is Over) in 1971:

***And so this is Christmas
For weak and for strong
The rich and the poor ones
The war is so long
And so happy Christmas
For black and for white
For yellow and red ones
Let's stop all the fights***

We have literally been in a war for our lives, for our jobs, for our industry and our society. Race relations became strained, there were more "have nots" than "haves" and our industry was totally devastated. Face-to-Face meetings were cancelled and we all had to go outside our comfort zone and start planning virtual meetings. As time went by, we were told that we could plan smaller events with a virtual component to ensure everyone's safety.

The PCMA Capital Chapter Professional Development Committee wanted to bring a hybrid meeting to you for Spark 4. I was so excited to be part of the planning committee and the day we spoke to the GM of the hotel where we were planning on having the event, I put on clothes that weren't lycra and high heels -- just for a Zoom call!

The discussion began very positively. The day we spoke was the first day the hotel was reopening. **Success #1!** The GM was very positive and she was looking forward to us meeting there. About 4-5 minutes into the conversation, she said, "If you're planning on any food, we won't be able to handle it, because we have no other groups the rest of the year. We can't bring our banquet staff in for a one day program."

Since we were building networking into the program and we all love having a beverage or two, we thought this wasn't going to work. We explained our concerns and wished her well.

Next call was the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. We were excited because we could have our hybrid with food and up to 50 people. **Success #2!** As the planning began, we found out that the 50 people had to include the production team, catering team and the speakers. We had one step forward, two back and only a few weeks to go.

We decided that it would not be fair to only allow 10-15 people to register so we decided to go with a virtual meeting but use the center's new Studio 801 and live stream it from there. **Success #3!**

Fortunately for us, this success was long lived. We kept a chart of everyone who had to be on site, their time of arrival and departure to ensure we stayed within the 50 person limit. We scheduled our site visit, met with the in-house A/V company, had several calls with the center's various departments and

finally decided we would use Zoom as our platform. We wanted everyone to see each other so that their faces would also show up on the screen that would face the stage. This allowed the speakers to be actually be looking at an audience.

Speaking of speakers, we learned that one of the groups we were relying on to provide a speaker decided to back out. Our panel would not be complete but it would still be historical.

We had a wonderful rehearsal and felt really good about how everything was going. The program was outstanding, registrations were increasing and the center was going to do live demos of their cleaning protocols and showcase the way food would be presented and served.

It was show day! Everyone was in place. The A/V company brought in a new person to run the videos, slides, Voice of God, etc. We began a quick run-through and found out the person they brought in didn't have any of the slides, videos or script. Was this three or four steps back?

Frantically we started sending him everything and assigned someone from our team to sit with him to make sure he ran the correct everything!

We received lots of positive feedback. It appeared that you, the participant, had no idea that behind the scenes we did a lot of scrambling.

If this story sounds familiar, it's because you all have had to pivot one way or another to get through your virtual meetings. So here's to 2021! We hope to get back to face-to-face meetings where networking, education, business, collaboration and engagement can take place safely!

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



Introducing the Wellness Series:

Going Screen-Less in 2021

The year 2020 offered Capital Chapter members the opportunity to learn a new hobby, binge watch the shows they didn't have the time to before, and much more that being at home had to offer. While we can appreciate these new experiences, we also can easily lose the balance of work and home. That is why we are introducing this wellness series to The Chatter! Visit this section for tips geared toward your mental and physical health based on comments from your peers.

We asked members, "What can we do to stay screen-less in the off hours?" This ask made some pause since many of their newly adopted hobbies involved a screen. Given the age we live in, this is not surprising when we have access to everything at our fingertips such as learning a new language, fitness programs, finding countless recipes for your ripe bananas and more.

We first addressed, how do you start your day? Does removing screens in the morning set the tone of your day differently than when you instantly grab your phone when you first wake up? Our industry prioritizes customer service and sometimes that means emails are the first thing we look at even before we've gotten out of bed! Actions that were offered ranged from setting a short alarm

to closing your eyes and listening to the sounds around you, writing down an affirmation or intention to start your day, stretching, or going for a walk. It may be a bit too cold for a walk outside, but it still inspired others to make a point to get out of the chair and move their body.

Taking it a step further, how do you ensure your day ends? Members have started to take up crocheting, puzzling, board games, coloring and reading a book. What these activities have in common is that they require your undivided attention and that is what makes these options so strong. There is no time for you to grab your phone mid-stitch or while you're strategizing your next game move. Taking the action to remove your eyes from the screens not only can help salvage your eyesight but can also help reduce anxiety and stress. We encourage you to set the intention to make time for some screen-less activities in 2021!

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

Help Is On The Way!

Armed with the resilience earned over the last year, we head into 2021 ready to move from reacting to recovering. Recovery won't happen overnight; however, it's encouraging to be standing on the road that at one time we weren't sure we'd ever see.

With vaccine distribution in progress and a COVID-19 Emergency Relief Package including critical assistance to the travel industry recently passed, there is a sense that help is on the way!

OPTIMISM IS THE FAITH THAT LEADS TO ACHIEVEMENT. NOTHING CAN BE DONE WITHOUT HOPE AND CONFIDENCE.

- Helen Keller

With so much riding on a COVID-19 vaccine to resume in-person events, here are some things to know from the CDC's website:

THE SAFETY OF COVID-19 VACCINES IS A TOP PRIORITY.

Learn how federal partners are working together to [ensure the safety of COVID-19 vaccines](#).

V-safe is a new smartphone-based, after-vaccination health checker for people who receive COVID-19 vaccines. It provides an additional layer of monitoring to increase CDC's ability to rapidly detect any safety issues with COVID-19 vaccines.

AFTER COVID-19 VACCINATION, YOU MAY HAVE SOME SIDE EFFECTS. THIS IS A NORMAL SIGN THAT YOUR BODY IS BUILDING PROTECTION.

Learn more about what [side effects to expect and get helpful tips](#)

COST IS NOT AN OBSTACLE TO GETTING VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19.

Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers may be able to charge administration fees for giving the shot. Vaccination providers can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the [Health Resources and Services Administration's Provider Relief Fund](#).

THE FIRST COVID-19 VACCINE IS BEING USED UNDER AN EMERGENCY USE AUTHORIZATION (EUA) FROM THE U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA). MANY OTHER VACCINES ARE STILL BEING DEVELOPED AND TESTED.

If more COVID-19 vaccines are authorized or approved by FDA, the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#) will quickly hold public meetings to review all available data and make recommendations for their use in the U.S. CDC continues to work at all levels with partners, including healthcare associations, on a flexible COVID-19 vaccination program that can accommodate different vaccines and adapt to different scenarios. State, tribal, local, and territorial health departments have [developed distribution plans](#) to make sure all recommended vaccines are available to their communities.

[Learn more about the benefits of getting vaccinated.](#)

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

Diversity and Inclusion Feature Series

The topic of Diversity and Inclusion is more than just a series of buzz words in American culture; it is a long-overdue reflective effort at seeing how people of all backgrounds and experiences bring their unique contributions to the table. As event professionals, we regularly interact and work with people who are different than ourselves. In the process, we recognize how our perspectives can be equally respected in service to creating and executing memorable, valuable, and personal events for our attendees. And often, if not in most ways, we have the chance to benefit from collaboration which we may not have had in our work had we not been engaged with diverse teams with broad contribution, extending well beyond what the individual contributes alone. Diversity and Inclusion is about respecting and giving platform to every voice among us, as we create the very best experiences for our stakeholders, together.

Enter the PCMA Capital Chapter Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, which was launched at the December 2019 Capital Chapter Board of Directors meeting aspiring to dive deeper into the strengths and weaknesses of our chapter in areas of diversity and inclusion; and to foster a commitment to creating and sustaining practices that will ensure D&I throughout PCMA nationally and locally. The Chatter will be featuring the important work of this task force in every issue of this publication in 2021. The task force's mission statement is comprehensive and detailed, covering key topics such as hiring and contracting practices, open communication, creating a culture of inclusion in all events, membership and leadership, educational programming that reaches all members, evaluating the Diversity and Inclusion plan on an annual basis to be sure goals and accomplishments are kept on track and adhere to our Chapter's Code of Conduct, and ensuring a safe and welcoming space for all that revolves around mutual respect and shared investment in the success of the chapter and our members.

Right out of the gate, the Task Force has established best practices for all members to reference and apply to their work. Focus areas include Event Design, Leadership, Mentorship, Marketing and Communications, and Safe Spaces. These resources are available to all PCMA Capital Chapter members, and we highly recommend that you check them out at <https://capital.pcma.org/>.

In this issue, in addition to spreading the word about this new Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, we as a chapter celebrate Black History Month, which is February. Did you know that Carter Godwin Woodson (1875 –1950), an American historian, author, journalist, and the founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), was one of the first scholars to study the history of the African diaspora, including African American history? He is credited with creating what we presently know as Black History Month and worked passionately to establish the event. His mission was to provide education and awareness on the origins, struggles, and achievements of African Americans throughout U.S. history. Originally, it existed as seven days of commemoration, first established in 1926.

2021 marks the **95TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH**, and the theme is "The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity". There are several free virtual events being hosted by ASALH. Check their web site for details: <http://asalh.org/festival>.

The work to embrace, encourage, and expand on Diversity and Inclusion within our industry is an on-going effort, and a part of the Capital Chapter's culture. In order to fully engage the membership and gather intel regarding current practices and understanding centered around D&I, a member survey is being developed for distribution in early 2021. Please look for it in your email boxes. Additionally, if you would like to learn more about joining the task force, email the Chair, Connie Samuels at csamuels@isri.org. You can also count on the Chatter to bring you content and updates in each issue on this vital, relevant, and ongoing effort.

Amanda Clark, CMP

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



Meet Rebound, Gizmo, Chumba Wumba & Chewbacca

Chapter member Kimberly Mladenik, CTA is the Director, Convention Sales, Mid-Atlantic Region with Visit Anaheim. To say that Kimberly is an animal lover is an understatement! She currently has a fur family of five: two dogs and three cats. Her 12-year-old border collie/beagle mix is aptly named Rebound because Kimberly adopted him after one of her other dogs passed. Kimberly rescued him from the San Jose Animal Shelter when he was just 8 weeks old. Also from the San Jose shelter, 10-year-old Gizmo is an Australian cattle dog mix adopted when he was five months old. Rebound escorted Kimberly to the shelter to be sure he would approve of the new addition to the family and he and Gizmo hit it off from the start.

The story of how the cats joined the family is heartwarming. Kimberly wanted a kitten to play with Rebound since he had so much puppy energy and needed a playmate. Wouldn't you know when Kimberly went to meet the kitten she had decided to adopt, another was tugging at her leg beckoning "take me too!". She could not resist and went home with two kittens that day: her gray fluffy boy, Chumba Wumba, and Siamese, Chewbacca.

Fast forward to her latest feline member. In September of last year, Kimberly was out for her usual early morning walk with the dogs. Halfway into their route, she heard a crying animal but couldn't tell what it was. Listening and following the cry, she noticed something in the gutter. It

was daybreak, and she had to bend down to see what was there. It turned out to be the tiniest kitten she'd ever seen. So - she scooped her up saying "come on boys - gotta head back home now". After a visit with the vet the kitten turned out to be clean and healthy, estimated to be four weeks old and weighing only half a pound! Kimberly named the kitten Tinkerbell, and the others were quite happy to welcome their only sister to the family.

Kimberly genuinely believes she was rescued by her amazing fur family stating that divine intervention does exist - sometimes you just need to have something cross your path at the right time!

Amanda Clark, CMP



We Want Your Recipes!

Are you bored with the same meals over and over again? Are you looking for some new and delicious recipes to add to your "tried and true" favorites? Maybe something low carb, Keto friendly, or vegan? Or just something different you can make for a busy night like a fast and yummy Instant Pot meal? Maybe you are looking for something gourmet for a special occasion and don't know where to start – well look no further!

We have been through a lot the past year, and with limited restaurant visits and client events I am sure you are all missing out on trying new food as much as we are! We are creating a fundraiser to help raise money for the chapter and to also share our most coveted family secret recipes with our most coveted family – you!

Our Chapter Cookbook will contain everything from simple recipes (these are encouraged as many of us need the simplicity) to some more challenging ones for those who actually have ramekins and know what shaved bottarga is!

As we work out the details on recipe submission guidelines and pricing for getting your best recipe included, we want to plant the seed now for you to get involved! There will be opportunities for advertising (quarter, half, and full-page ads), and we will be selling digital and hard copies of the book. Everyone can get involved, hoteliers & restaurateurs with recipes from their chefs, CVBs promoting their cities with recipes from their local restaurants, organizations and their CEO's submitting their favorite recipes. It's easy and all you need to do is share the idea with your network! You will be able to submit more than one recipe and the book will be developed to accommodate all submissions while we will make sure to promote supplier services, products, and destinations in an easy-to-read format.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU:

- Submit Recipes
- Buy Ads
- Reserve Copies
- How? Click Here https://capital.pcma.org/?post_type=tribe_events&p=4235&preview=true

Regardless of your cooking skills, everyone likes to add new recipes to their favorites – so join us and help create the best PCMA Chapter Cookbook ever!

Our goal of this cookbook fundraiser is to raise much needed funds for the Capital Chapter as well as provide a source of joy we can share with our chapter family.

If you have any questions, please reach out to **Vicki Johnson** at vicki@vjmeetings.com or (703) 298-8085.

The Cookbook Committee hopes you all enjoyed the holidays and may 2021 bring us all peace, love, unity, and community.

Vicki Johnson, President
Vicki Johnson & Associates

SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE

S.O.S - Can You Spare 12 Hours in 2021?

The Sponsorship Committee Needs Your Help!

Clint Eastwood once said, "What you put into life is what you get out of it." The best way to get more from your membership with PCMA is to volunteer. You will be able to expand your network, build your resume, learn new skills, have a positive impact, and feel good.

I've been volunteering with the Capital Chapter for most of my career, and have met numerous friends and clients in addition to having fun along the way. The Sponsorship Committee is looking for a few volunteers to join our committee, and the time commitment is minimal (1-2 hours a month). Please contact Regina Rink, Sponsorship Chair, if you are interested or would like more information to make a decision.

Regina Rink, CASE, Sales Director – DC & NE
Destination Toronto

**“WHAT YOU PUT
INTO LIFE IS
WHAT YOU GET
OUT OF IT.”**

Government Relations and Advocacy Committee Builds on Momentum From 2020

2020 was an eventful year for our chapter's Government Relations and Advocacy (GRA) Committee. Through the leadership of Christine Frye, the committee was able to take on some of the most pressing advocacy needs our industry has faced in years, including a crazy election cycle. Despite having to cancel GMID 2020, we are gearing up for an exciting GMID 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused, and continues to cause major budget shortfalls, and even more furloughs along with loss of employment. The GRA Committee worked with our industry partners to sign on to letters of support, attend briefings, and contributed to surveys, all with the same goal of requesting that Congress pass COVID relief stimulus to the meetings and events industry, the association industry, and travel industry. Since so much still needs to be done to help reinvigorate the industry not only in our region but across the US, the GRA Committee is looking to increase the number of advocacy trainings, advocacy briefs and letters, and of course increase our participation in Global Meetings Industry Day on April 8, 2021.

The GRA Committee hopes you will join us as we reach out to members of Congress, the new Administration, and other organizations to promote the issues that are vital to Recovery, Opportunity, and Innovation.

Robin Troutman, Deputy Director
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

SAVE THE DATE

**Global Meetings
Industry Day on**

April 8, 2021.



We should warn you - Vancouver changes people.

Their perspectives, their trajectories. There's something about this raw natural beauty, mixed with urban entrepreneurial activity that isn't just attention grabbing. It's unignorable. It invites people in, opens their eyes and expands their minds. And when it's time to go, your delegates may find that even though they're leaving this place, this place will probably never leave them.

We cant wait to meet with you again.

tourismvancouver.com/meetings

VANCOUVER

Spotlight on a Member's COVID Career Re-Design



Susan Haning was a fashion merchandising manager for Bloomingdales. She has a degree in Fashion Merchandising & Marketing and a vision of traveling the world; in particular, frequent trips to Paris. So how and why does a fashion merchandising manager weave herself into the hospitality industry?

Susan says it was a complete fluke disguised as a guy she met at Rumors in DC. She found that the fashion merchandising industry had eliminated their trend for travel to Paris and "the guy", who worked for Andrews-Bartlett Exposition Services, sewed a pretty picture of a hospitality world that was all about travel. Susan, who knew nothing about our industry, took her first stitch with Andrews-Bartlett & Associates as a customer service representative for five years before ABES was bought by GES. She discarded her customer service robe and slipped into an account manager role for GES. The guy friend was no longer in her design, but after 10 years with ABES/GES, Susan's career in the hospitality industry was beginning to take form.

Susan moved from GES to Freeman and spent another 10 years with Freeman/AVW as their National Sales Manager and then another nearly 10 years with NAILBA (National Association. of Independent Life Brokerage Agencies) as Director of Business Development (aka Queen of Schmooze), selling their event's exhibits, sponsorships, and advertising. Then Freeman coerced her back as Director of Industry Relations and several months later offered Susan her dream job of overseeing the Brand Experience Labs as a Director of Business Development. The Brand Experience labs (BELs) offered monthly customer education sessions dealing with hot trends relevant to the industry, personal issues, speaker attainment, F&B or anything about which the existing and prospective customers would like to hear. Then came COVID and Susan found herself needing to create a whole new "wardrobe" to support herself until the industry came back from the pandemic. Her designs are inspiring!

- Her friend owns a retail consignment store, so Susan put her retail and sales expertise back to work helping her friend part time.
- Then Susan yoked her new design with another part-time job at the Merritt Academy, a learning academy that provides care and educates children from infant through 8th grade. She heard that they were looking for substitute teachers and runners (teachers who escort students to and from the parents and class). Susan was assigned to substituting and "running" the infants and toddlers. She shared that nothing made her day more than the happy, unbiased little smiles from her "kids".
- To compliment her temporary wardrobe change, Susan went to the other end of the wheel and adopted a senior to whom she brings food every week. (Until COVID forced a stop on this). A mentor in our industry heard what she was doing and suggested that she should start a business cooking for others in her neighborhood. Her new business started with a few customers which grew to 25 and for Thanksgiving she had 55 orders. She decided to name her new business "A Taste of Heaven & Home" - (West Virginia = "heaven" + "home" for home cooked meals). For Christmas Susan offered breakfast breads, breakfast casseroles and holiday cookie trays and gift baskets.

Susan enjoys catering to the senior citizens, yet it is a lot of work and she misses interacting with people. She hopes someday to get back to her dream job with Freeman and for now she is actively interviewing with associations. Think about her talents... in addition to fashion merchandising & marketing design, she has customer service, account management, exhibits, sponsorship, advertising, business development, education, and "catering" to people. She has previous association and contracting experience and during COVID, she gained her certification in virtual meetings to add to her CEM and CMP designations. As an aside, Susan learned right after she joined the hospitality industry that her aunt was an executive director in our industry, so hospitality is obviously in her jeans (oops! I mean genes). If you want to take lessons in creativity and keeping a positive spirit during a world-wide pandemic, find Susan. Her style is guaranteed to bring balance and symmetry to your world.

Marilyn Atchue-Zuill, Global Account Director
HPN Global



The Next Shift

Virtual to Hybrid

Our industry, like many others, is evolving with the current pandemic climate. Future considerations include hotel amenities consisting of in-room COVID-19 testing and mandatory vaccine requirements prior to attending an event. Adjustments to organizations' standard SOP's take place monthly, if not weekly, to keep up with the ever-changing information hitting our newsfeeds every morning. It is safe to say that many inter-office meetings scheduled this week will focus intently on how organizations should move from a completely virtual meeting environment to a hybrid format with the hope that the implementation of the vaccine will get us back into a face-to-face (F2F) environment this summer.

Despite our meetings embodying "hybrid" for many years, its definition has taken on a new significance. The difficult part? Hybrid's meaning doesn't blanket our industry. It means something very different to every organization.

The Meetings Means Business Coalition (MMB) and Association Forum (AF) recently hosted The Future of Association In-Person Meetings, a Town Hall consisting of industry leaders to discuss next steps to re-emerge F2F meetings and events. Paul Pomerantz, CEO, American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), offered some insight on his perspective regarding how to utilize the virtual platform to attract the first-time attendee and larger audiences.

Last year ASA's virtual convention produced their "largest professional attendance ever" with nearly 14,000 people. This allowed them to "bring on people who wouldn't normally come to our meetings in the past, didn't have the money, didn't have the time and particularly people in the early stages of their career." Once they attend virtually, "they are going to want to be there." The virtual component provides another pathway to the convention, it doesn't replace the live event "where networking and building careers take place."

All in all, virtual allows you to expand your audience and create a feeder to the live F2F event. It also enhances the F2F by capturing and maintaining international attendance or those who will be living with travel bans while the economy recovers.

The development of American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) Annual offers another perspective. They've always had a separate division that offers on-line education, so when they were forced to cancel their 2020 Annual, they did not move forward with a virtual program. What lies ahead this year? A "Try-brid" format that offers **1) an in-person format, 2) deliberate pre-recorded content that will be part of a library to access before, during and after the convention, and 3) a combination of sessions offering live stream and in-person attendance with real time live chat sessions.**

In discussing the Try-brid format further with Ellen Shortill, ASHA's Director, Convention and Meetings explained,

"We don't anticipate dramatically changing our convention for years to come. Only for our immediate needs. The core of our convention will go back to what it was with enhancements learned from the process. We are not going to evolve into an over-digitized format." ASHA will increase what they have done in the past, but do not want to lose the integrity of what their online education department brings to their members. "There is a difference on how you learn online and in person that always needs to be considered."

The one consistent message offered in researching the successful shift ahead? "Only thing constant is change." "Plan it out," offers Gregory Fine, CEO, CCIM Institute and CCIM Technologies. "Move it out to wherever you can in order to be proactive and not reactive."

COVID has changed the landscape of our industry. Not all cities have the same safety guidelines and event strategists need to re-learn what centers and hotels have to offer on-site as rules change from one city to the next. Short-term planning must be extended. Every organization in the planning stages of events this year must decide how they will utilize virtual, if at all, to enhance the live event. The absence of the F2F meeting upped the ante of the virtual component. The complexity has increased, and organizations need to dive deep to uncover how the virtual program is a conduit to enhancing their F2F program.

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

3 Key Steps for Your Hybrid Success

The success of your next event will rely on your ability to meet the needs of those who made the trip to the venue and those who made the much shorter trip to their desks for the digital experience.

Our in-person attendees are more likely to stay in a session room, but at-home attendees don't have to worry about that awkward, what-if-I-walk-out-now decision. In fact, according to PCMA's Digital Event Strategist <https://www.pcma.org/products/des/program>, remote participants will only give a session between one and three minutes to determine if they care enough to stick around.

But what about the rest of each program?

After you get past those first few minutes, what needs to happen to make the experience a success for everyone?

While the future of your event portfolio may feel uncertain, one truth is clear: You will be balancing the needs of two different audiences.

HERE ARE 3 KEY PIECES OF ADVICE FOR YOUR HYBRID PLAN:

1. Find a tech partner you can count on. What's the easiest reason to justify leaving a meeting? Technical difficulties. As you gear up for a hybrid experience, make sure your production partner has a backup plan for the backup plan to ensure clear audio, high-definition video, and a glitch-free connection.
2. Create a conversation-starting space. Your on-site and online audiences share a key commonality: They want to participate — not just watch. Consider ways to get everyone involved with an interactive poll where everyone's voice can be heard. After all, whether they're in the room or in their living rooms, no one wants to simply stare at presentation slides.
3. Place an equal focus on your speakers' well-being. Your attendees may not be the only ones at home. More speakers will be broadcasting from outside the venue even after the pandemic challenges subside, so it's important to tailor your experience to the high-profile names on your program.

CASE IN POINT

Consider a recent hybrid event hosted by the Catholic Medical Association that featured 57 breakout sessions. Linda Donnelly, Director of Events at the organization, made the decision to pre-record all of them. In addition to the peace of mind that recorded content offers for event planners, it's also a comforting step for speakers who may still be getting accustomed to the hybrid world and aren't quite ready for the live-streaming prime time.

Looking for more tips on how to make hybrid events resonate with your community? Get in touch with [Performedia](#) to hear how our team has been helping event organizers navigate the next normal of content strategy, digital sponsorships, and attendee engagement.

Dahlia El Gazzar, Idea Igniteur + Tech Therapist
DAHLIA•Agency

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Convention Center Expansions During Lull in Meetings

The Events Industry Council's survey states that the United States, which normally hosts more than 250,000 conventions annually, drew 84.7 million people in 2016 with a total of \$110.4 billion spent.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unexpected and difficult changes in the hospitality industry and, specifically, at convention centers and venues. In 2020 many were closed, a few remained open for meetings with limited attendee participation producing far less revenue, and other convention centers and venues were repurposed into homeless shelters or field hospitals.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has hit the industry hard financially as well. Convention centers and cities across the United States have suffered due to defaults on municipal bonds, hotel tax revenues drying up, and insolvency. Yet, many states, cities, and municipalities are approving budgets to expand convention centers in order to attract future events. How is this possible? The Federal Reserve has cut interest rates to an all-time low, not only assisting those centers that may be in default but also allowing refinancing opportunities.

According to the Baltimore Sun article entitled "Few Conventions, But Convention Centers Continue with Their Expansion" convention centers are expanding space during these trying times to keep up with the competition,

"This is a perverse world where market realities do not affect city decision-making," said Heywood Sanders, a professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio who studies the use of convention centers as urban renewal tools. "If enough events go away, local taxpayers could end up paying back debt that centers took on to expand", Sanders said. "You've made a very large bet in an environment of enormous risk and uncertainty," he said. "And once you place it, you can't undo it."

Competition is fierce and convention centers must constantly renovate and expand their centers in order to retain their (repeat) clients and attract new meetings. The competition is even more intense, currently, with fewer meetings being held. Clients are looking for newly designed spaces such as open areas, panoramic windows, and plenty of pop-up meeting rooms.

With experts predicting that a full-scale meetings industry will be back online (face to face) in two years, time will tell if states, cities, and municipalities made the right decision. As a meetings advocate, I bet they did!

 **Rosa Mendoza-Friedheim, Vice President, Global Accounts Conference Direct**

ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER MIX 'N QUIZ?

The PCMA Capital Chapter has launched a new monthly online event to relieve stress and offer a fun, casual way to network with your peers. It's easy, it's short and most of all very entertaining!

Build a team of 4-6 players or sign up by yourself (we will assign you to a team)

SAVE THE DATE:
February 24

Registration and pricing information will be emailed to all chapter members soon.

Meetings and Events Industry Unite!

We are in this together and unity is what defines us as family. Sadly, the 2020 furlough affected many in the hospitality community. And over the months, it filtered to nearly every sector of the meetings and events industry. Many found themselves looking for emotional support, navigating the unemployment system, searching for jobs and hoping this was a short-term impact to our industry. Unfortunately, it was only the beginning.

Furlough turned in to separation for many and no clear-cut path to recovery. It was only a matter of time and the many social media groups on Facebook, LinkedIn, and list-serves began talking about either pivoting or potential jobs in other business sectors. There were posts and articles written about how individuals from the event/hotel industry possess skills transferable to many roles outside of their business sector.

Throughout the year, our industry celebrated as colleagues, friends, business associates, and strangers found jobs. Information was exchanged about the best way to stand out to leaders in other business sectors. Medical device companies, assisted living facilities, insurance companies and financial institutions all benefited from the experience of former event/hotel professionals.

The loss of talent in the industry has been great; however, not everyone has opted to take a new road. Some have been in a position to take a different approach. Assessing their future goals, dreams, education needs they are charting a new course, in the event industry. The PCMA Capital Chapter has volunteer members who have done just that. We have seen changes from those who acquired a Digital Event Specialist certification to those still looking for a new role. We celebrate with chapter members who have used their voices to enhance the industry and empathize with those still looking.

These trends led the Emerging Professionals Committee to expand their typical rising

professionals reach to include everyone who needs career help in these difficult times. This amazing team can use volunteers to help with their one-on-one peer coaching program. Visit www.generationmeet.com/mentorship to learn more about how you can be an asset to a fellow PCMA member, or if you need direction for your next steps.

This year has united us and defined us as a family. Please know there are those who want to help and encourage you toward your next steps. Use these resources to connect and help move you forward in 2021!

#Inthisogether

Tanna Pearman, Meeting Broker
Meetings Made Easy



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Truly Giving of Oneself

On November 6, the PCMA Capital Chapter's Community Services Committee hosted a blood drive as one of our final events in 2020 at the Madison Hotel. The original goal was to target only chapter members, however due to the pandemic marketing was expanded to include MPI, AMPS and IAEE.

Hosting a blood drive involves extensive planning and Taaz Williams with the American Red Cross was instrumental in assisting us. She instructed us on exactly what type of facility was needed, including how much space was needed for actual donations along with access for American Red Cross employees to bring their equipment in and out. All dates must be approved by the American Red Cross to ensure they have enough personnel for the drive and dates were filling up fast. We needed to look for a space to host and someone from the American Red Cross needed to inspect the facility as well. At the time of planning, the Madison Hotel was still closed, and Nadia Choukairi stepped up, opening for us to conduct a site inspection

With the date and location finalized we needed to find volunteers to help staff the front door, registration desk and the canteen. The American Red Cross had provided guidelines on posting to social media which helped create our content and generate buzz. They also sent out a rapid pass list to the donors ahead of time to ensure a smooth registration process.

On the day of the drive, everything went smoothly! Paolo Pedrazzini, General Manager, Madison Hotel, was there to greet us and hotel staff were extremely helpful. The American Red Cross staff were very professional and made everyone feel safe and comfortable.

Every day in the U.S. approximately 36,000 units of red blood cells are needed, which means nearly every two seconds someone needs blood. By being a donor, you donate a pint of blood and it takes an hour of your time. Despite a short turnaround timeframe for our first blood drive, the Community Services Committee is proud to have been able to bring in 26 donors! Our committee intends to host another blood drive at some point in the future and will take our learnings from this event to allow ourselves more lead time to increase our advertising reach and bring in more blood donors.

In the meantime, if you would like to learn more or find out where to donate blood, [visit www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

**Donna Del Gallo, Director, Citywide Accounts – DC
San Francisco Travel**

**EVERY DAY IN THE U.S.
APPROXIMATELY 36,000
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Convening Leaders Perspectives from 2 Additional Chapter Scholarship Recipients

Well done PCMA! It is no secret that we all miss face-to-face interaction. Convening Leaders met the challenge of moving to virtual and did not disappoint. The Juno platform was robust and user friendly. The site was well laid out and organized in sections – all providing different ways to participate and engage. Each area was rich in content and like every other Convening Leaders I have attended, I wanted to participate in everything! I was grateful for the library, where I was able to watch missed sessions and enjoy meditation segments at my leisure.

The international presence seemed more prominent to me in the virtual format allowing us to hear from speakers around the globe. This was a cool reminder that our industry is strong in every time zone.

The micro community allowed for me to meet new people and get some face-to-face conversation that I was craving. Our industry truly is a community and that was evident by the flurry of activity in the chat during sessions – we motivate one another and positively feed off each other.

The overall theme of reskilling and rebuilding was reinforced in every segment of the conference. Messages conveyed were heartfelt and really resonated with me after the tumultuous year we all had in 2020. **There are endless ways to innovate!** So --get out there and learn, learn, learn.

We are survivors, we will not give up, we will rebuild and reshape the world of meetings.

 **Amanda Clark, CMP**



With 2020 being such a pivotal year in the meetings and events industry, PCMA Convening Leaders 2021 was one that I looked forward to for renewal and encouragement. Much like the live event, CL21 had an abundance of content to inform, network and engage attendees from across the globe.

This year's sessions bravely addressed topics that were important to discuss as we collectively navigate this unprecedented world. The themes of innovation; the future of events; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and women in leadership were amongst the topics that resonated the most.

One of my biggest takeaways from this year's event was during the Main Stage session with the Honorable Julia Gillard, Former Prime Minister of Australia. She discussed the ways in which we can become better leaders in daily practice. Most notably, she reminded us all that we are not immediately the leaders we want to be; so we should not judge ourselves against a finished product that one may admire. We must grow into the leader we want to be.

I am much appreciative of the opportunity to continue my education through this event. I am proud to be part of an industry that continues to innovate the ideas of engagement beyond what we knew it to be.

I connected.

I danced.

I conquered.

Thank you PCMA Capital Chapter for the opportunity to participate in this year's conference. I look forward to implementing the ideas and best practices I learned throughout the year, both personally and professionally.

 **Connie Samuels, CMP, DES, Senior Meeting Planner
Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc.**

Emerging Professionals Committee Classroom Visits

I was honored to receive the 2020 Star of the Year Award. I am so thrilled to have received this recognition for my work in planning the chapter's classroom visits. I also want to thank the volunteer speakers who took time to share with the students, as well as the professors who allowed us to come into their classrooms. 2020 certainly brought some challenges as we needed to shift to all virtual programming, but it also brought some success as we were able to reach out and present virtually to more schools than we have done in the past. We also added two new HBCU's to our list of participants. Finally, I would like to thank, Jessica Baker (Gaylord National), Katelyn Campbell (Destination DC), and Tyra Dyson (APIC), for their support in helping to make 2020 EPC Classroom Visit programming possible!

Thank You 2020 EPC Classroom Visit participating Professors/Schools and Speakers!

PROFESSORS/SCHOOLS:

- **ROB WEBB**, CMP, MBA
Marymount University School of Business – **March 24, 2020**
- **ANITA ZATORI**, Ph.D
Radford University – **April 2020** (3 one-on-one interviews)
- **ROB WEBB**, CMP, MBA
Marymount University School of Business – **April 7, 2020**
- **THERESA LIND**, M.Ed., CMP, CWP, CSEP
James Madison University – **April 28, 2020**
- **RUTH ANN JACKSON-BAST**, MBA, PhD
Penn State University – **April 29, 2020**
- **BERKITA S. BRADFORD**, PhD and Novita Epps, MA
Virginia State University – **September 24, 2020**
- **TINA JONES**,
George Mason University (Prerecorded) **September 26, 2020**
- **ANITA ZATORI**, Ph.D
Radford University – **October 27, 2020**
- **PAMELA ALLISON**, PhD
University of Maryland Eastern Shore – **November 4, 2020**
- **STUART LEVY**, MBA, PhD
The George Washington University – **November 5, 2020**
- **THERESA LIND**, M.Ed., CMP, CWP, CSEP
James Madison University – **December 3, 2020**

SPEAKERS:

- **JESSICA BAKER**, Senior Sales Executive, Gaylord National
- **SHANNON BURKE**, CMP, Director of Conference and Meetings, National Association for College Admission Counseling
- **KATELYN CAMPBELL**, Convention Sales Manager, Destination DC
- **TYRA D. DYSON**, CMP, DES, Manager, Event Logistics, Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)
- **CHRISTINE FAIMAN**, Global Account Executive, Global Sales Organization, Marriott International
- **CHRISTINE GUTERMUTH**, CMP, Senior Director of Meetings and Events, Air-Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI)
- **CARLA HUNT**, National Sales Assistant Director, Disney Meetings and Events
- **DION JAMES-ZANFORDINO**, CASE, Regional Sales Executive, Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB
- **DANA JOHNSTON**, CMP, Senior Manager, Convention Operations and Meetings, Infectious Diseases Society of America
- **JIM KELLY**, Vice President, Marketing & Industry Relations, Fern Exposition Services, LLC
- **ERIC KINCAID**, National Account Director, HMCC, Destination DC
- **KYLA KNUDSON**, Director of Sales, Teneo Hospitality Group
- **STACEY KNOPPEL**, Director of Convention Management, Events DC
- **LEAH LEWIS**, CMP, Director, Meetings, American Gear Manufacturers Association
- **AMIL MENDEZ**, Founder and Managing Partner, Rayne Event Tech and Lounge
- **B. MURPHY**, CEM, Senior National Sales Manager, Fern Exposition Services, LLC
- **ARLENE NOYES**, Associate Director of Convention Management, Events DC
- **TRAVIS PETERSON**, Senior Account Executive, US Account Sales, Marriott International
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- **JOSE' RINGGOLD**, National Account Manager, Projection
- **CONNIE SAMUELS**, CMP, Senior Meeting Planner, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc.
- **AMY STALKNECHT**, Assistant Director Client Solutions, Freeman
- **VALERIE SUMNER**, Principal, VRS Meetings & Events
- **JENNIFER VASELECK**, CMP, Meeting and Event Manager, Experient
- **RHONDA WALKER**, Interim Director of Sales & Marketing, Experience Prince George's
- **JOY WOMACK**, CMP, Director, Operations, Meetings and Events Learning, Leadership Development, and Evaluation, Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)

If you are interested in volunteering as a speaker in 2021, or if you are a professor and would like to schedule a classroom visit, please contact me **Malene S. Ward**, CMP, CEM, DES at MalenEvents@hotmail.com.

Malene S. Ward, CMP, CEM, DEC
Phoenix Planning

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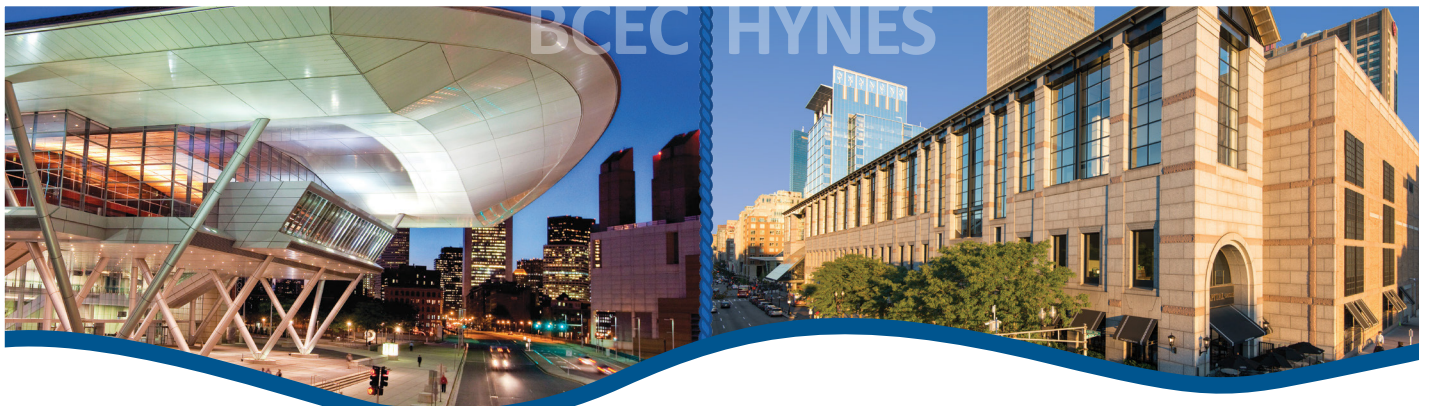
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