

THE Chatter

FEATURED ARTICLES

WELLNESS

PG. 5

THE WELLNESS SERIES

How Employers Are Prioritizing
Work/Life Balance for Their Staff



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

PG. 6

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FEATURE SERIES

The Leadership Role in Diversity
and Inclusion



ADVOCACY CORNER

PG. 9

ADVOCACY CORNER

Global Meetings Industry Day



CONTRACTS

PG. 13

CONTRACTS REFRESHED



MEMBERS AND THEIR PETS

PG. 15

CHICKENS, TURTLES AND IGUANAS... OH MY.



Our
Chapter's
2021 Theme:
ROI



ROI = Recovery, Opportunity, and Innovation

The new ROI is Recovery, Opportunity, and Innovation. It is a fitting theme for the PCMA Capital Chapter after experiencing a year that has wreaked havoc on the hospitality and events industry. Aside from dealing with a new, ominous disease, we dealt with the loss of face-to-face communication and education, jobs, and income. Every aspect of our industry and how we conduct business has, arguably, changed forever.

"The theme came about almost by chance," said Chapter President John Rubsamen. "We were focusing on returning to the workforce and on the opportunities we could address to give value and education to the membership at the time of recovery," he continued. "To do that, we have to be innovative in our approach to this never-before-experienced situation."

Recovery can be challenging when we are still in a pandemic, "but we are a resilient industry," notes Vicki Johnson, CMP, Immediate Past Chapter President. "We are all experts at developing plans and processes, and that will help us recover." Rubsamen adds, "The chapter has to do whatever we can to help our members—hoteliers, service providers, event specialists, as well as associations—to get back to business."

"It has become more evident that our \$1.07 trillion industry is a major driver of the world economy."

"Recovery also brings about the Opportunity to change and not do things the way they've always been done," noted Johnson. "This year showed that disruption—my theme last year—makes people re-evaluate what and how they've been delivering educational content, as well as how they approach the streams of revenue for their organizations," she continued. Chapter President-Elect Marcus Eng, CMP, DES, agrees, "We have to reimagine our meetings to face the challenges that exist and to answer the demands of our members and clients."

"To meet our opportunities, we must also be Innovative," says Chapter Treasurer Rebecca Ramsey. "Things have changed dramatically, probably forever," Eng observes. "There is a significant increase at the speed change happens. We all are learning new methodologies for delivering content. We have to learn from what we have been through. New models for doing business are emerging." That includes meeting space and contracts as well. Rubsamen points out, "Hotels will have to look at their contracts, especially the sleeping room to meeting space formulas. The days of crowded meeting rooms are over." Meeting facility managers also will have to pay close attention to the cleanliness of their venues and follow other safety protocols. The arrival/departure patterns of attendees will vary, as virtual is likely still to be relevant for some attendees. But there is a silver lining, Ramsey says, "We have no choice but to be innovative to help our industry to recover and grow."

**“RECOVERY ALSO
BRINGS ABOUT
THE OPPORTUNITY
TO CHANGE”**

 Sara Torrence, CMP Emeritus, President
Sara Torrence and Associates

PRESIDENT

John Rubsamen, Americans for the Arts

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Marcus Eng, CMP, American Public Transportation Association

TREASURER

Rebecca Ramsey, EventEQ

SECRETARY

Stacey Knoppel, Events DC

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Vicki Johnson, CMP, Vicki Johnson & Associates, LLC

DIRECTORS

Sara Haywood, CMP, National Council for Behavioral Health

Deirdre Clemmons, CMP, CAE, Airports Council International-North America

Jessica Smith, CMP, MTA, MCI USA

Mary Kreins, Disney Destinations

Greg Brice, Encore

Ashley Eubanks, Hilton Worldwide

COMMITTEE CHAIRS**Communications**

Kristen Parker, CASE, Visit Austin

Rosa Mendoza-Friedheim, CASE, DES, CDMP, ConferenceDirect

Community Services

Cheri Fairchild, CMP, Caesars Entertainment

Emily Parsons, CMP, The National Association of Attorneys General

Diversity & Inclusion Task Force

Connie Samuels, CMP, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc.

Emerging Professionals

Eric Kincaid, HMCC, Destination DC

Dana Johnston, CMP, Infectious Diseases Society of America

Tyra Dyson, CMP, APIC

Government Relations & Advocacy

Christine Frye, CEM

Robin Troutman, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

Marketing

Carson Edwards, MBA, CASE, CDMP, Marriott International

Shameka Jennings, MTA, CMP, National Coalition of STD Directors

Membership

Christine Faiman, CMP, Marriott International

Marilyn Atchue-Zuill, Hospitality Performance Network Global

Professional Development

Leah Lewis, CMP, American Gear Manufacturers Association

Melissa Peticolas, CEM, Vista Convention Services

Sponsorship

Regina Rink, CASE, Destination Toronto

Anissa Ladd, CASE, Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau

Capital Chapter Board Liaison

Christine Trimmer, The Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions Foundation

**MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD**

Cheers to a Better Year in 2021

As we chart a new course for 2021, I'm honored and could not be happier to be a new member of the Capital Chapter Board. I bring over 20 years of experience in both the association and corporate meeting planning environments and look forward to working with all of you.

As the board liaison for the Emerging Professionals Committee and keeping in line with the theme of the chapter for the year, Recovery, Opportunity, and Innovation, I'm excited to share with you, that the EPC is introducing a new opportunity called, "**Coffee and Conversations**".

The purpose of the program is to engage in more direct and in-depth conversations with students and emerging leaders on a specific topic. Each conversation is intended to be a virtual, 30-minute session led by multiple industry leaders. We want to appeal to younger professionals in more appealing environments.

It is critical as industry leaders, that we share our knowledge and expertise with students and younger professionals. We hope to create a forum, where we can share lessons learned, real world experiences and provide information that can't be learned from a book.

As Tyra Dyson, EPC Co-Chair, said, "During this time of uncertainty in our industry, it is more important than ever, that we find a way to keep each other engaged, encouraged, and informed".

Our road to recovery may be a long one, and I for one want to ensure that we maintain a viable, re-skilled and re-energized workforce that loves the hospitality industry as much as I do!

In today's virtual and remote work environment, the Emerging Professionals Committee looks forward to introducing other innovative ways to guide via virtual mentorship and share invaluable industry information with our emerging leaders. We continue to meet the needs and provide resources for industry professionals.

We anticipate launching the program this fall so watch for more information in future Chatter issues as well as the Chapter website capital.pcma.org

Deirdre Clemmons, CMP, CAE, Board of Directors

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.

Unfiltered Conversations

Dual Perspectives on Contracting in a New Environment

Over the last few weeks, we reached out to both business event strategists and supplier partners to understand the challenges and successes experienced while working together in this landscape. Take a look and let us know what you think.

@PCMA Capital Chapter LinkedIn

Last month, 61,000 jobs were lost in the hospitality industry as reported by NorthStar Meetings Group. That is a decrease from the 536,000 jobs lost in December, but as we move towards recovery, "hotel employment is unlikely to reach pre-pandemic levels until 2023" (American Hotel and Lodging Association's 2021 State of the Industry Report). The hotel industry was the first industry to be affected by COVID-19 as meetings were cancelled even before the stay-at-home mandate. Shortly after, we saw the re-design of our event strategists' organizations which continues into 2021.

Feedback from supplier peers primarily highlighted positives. A director from a prominent hotel chain's national sales office offered that they have "worked incredibly well in partnership". A "majority of cancellations have resulted in re-bookings" and "while some clients are hesitant to book farther out, we are seeing others take the opportunity to book well into the future."

The redesign of the force majeure clause evoked the most discussion. How can this clause expand to offer mutual protection and accountability? While some feedback indicated that hotels have been able to come together to find a middle ground, another hotel shared a different experience. Some "planners are requiring non-negotiable force majeure clauses with vague and subjective terms for future years that are one-sided, putting the majority of the risk on the hotels".

Moving forward, it is important to understand almost every organization has taken a hit financially. The return to meetings and how attendees will approach travel can only be speculated. Together we need to develop brave and honest conversations that progress intentionally to understand while protecting our organizations at the same time.

Alyssa Kolat, Site Solutions Worldwide, summed it up very nicely. "Recognizing that you and your supplier both have performance goals that differ completely is one key to success in partnering. Opening the conversations to the priorities of how we are measured in work performance and understanding that they differ greatly has really worked for me. We are tough on our requirements because we want to perform at high levels, so we can each do well against performance measures."

Last year event strategists were forced to shift to virtual platforms or completely cancel their meetings. While some are still virtual, others are moving forward with hybrid formats in hopes of producing conventions that will sustain the expected revenues from past years. Producing a meeting that doesn't have the metrics once enjoyed is a tremendous challenge. Contracting for the unknown is an even greater challenge. "We don't know if our members will attend," was a commonly expressed concern. We are all launching first time meetings which raises new questions for contracting.

One industry peer offered some of the many questions we are trying to consider under compressed timelines. "Should we be booking for our normal numbers or a percentage? Should we be asking for socially distanced space? Since we need more space but less sleeping rooms, how will that impact our contract? What does F&B look like? Will we need more individual meals and more servers to distribute? What infrastructure does the hotel have to produce a hybrid? I can go on and on. We're still trying to process this and determine what risks we're comfortable with, but it is a struggle." Not to mention the answers to these questions differ within each hotel and center contract.

Legal advisors are adding more clauses to contracts to protect the association. One person shared the difficulty of getting vendors to approve new health and safety clauses in their contracts. Another referenced having a problem finding trustworthy suppliers. The current climate has produced some negotiation styles that offer little compromise and a hard line. How do we steer these conversations in the right direction?

Offering common ground has helped. "I just make sure to let them know we are in this together as partners, and I want to be fair," said one event professional. She further explains that a conservative approach is what she expects with a bit of compromise on both sides. It takes real conversation to be successful. One can't rely on emails back and forth.

The general consensus from the group? Transparency and patience will help to uncover solutions. Listen to understand, not to win.

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

 **Chandra Champion, MSSA, CNM, Senior Manager of Conferences and Events**
National WIC Association

The Wellness Series

How Employers Are Prioritizing Work/Life Balance for Their Staff

As we approach 12 months of transitioning and pivoting to the pandemic lifestyle, many Capital Chapter members have gotten used to their homes being their offices. This situation causes a lack of boundaries for the employee to separate work from their personal life. We asked members what their employers are doing to recognize this shift in balance and what they've appreciated about these opportunities. Additionally, we focused on what organizations can do to bring back the momentum of being in-person and promote team building.

FLEXIBLE FRIDAY

Describing how management handles Fridays was a very popular response when we asked members what they enjoyed most about the changes their employers were making. Many businesses have been allowing Friday to be a bit more relaxed for their staff. Some organizations have extended the "Summer Friday" where employees can end their day early, such as 3:00 pm. Other companies have taken it to another level and while they add an extra hour to everyone's workday Monday through Thursday, they close the office every other Friday.



PHYSICAL WELLNESS AND OVERALL WELL BEING

One employee benefit you may have had before the pandemic was access to a gym. How are companies providing the same value to their teams? The alternative is a monthly allowance to use towards a gym membership or even to get a massage. Additionally, companies are organizing OnDemand classes and using fitness apps to encourage step challenges amongst staff. This act from employers has also transitioned into competitions where staff can win gift cards or other benefits. Who doesn't love a healthy competition?

Not as common in responses, but highly acknowledged by a member, was a company that provided access to a therapist. Especially in a pandemic, it is important that employers acknowledge and provide opportunities for their staff to tend to their mental health. This opportunity may not be as feasible, but perhaps an alternative is encouraging staff to review the wellness benefits within the health insurance that the company offers. Another way to stimulate happiness within the virtual office is offering fun opportunities for the day. A staff retreat or even one day a month that is allocated to connecting the staff can help improve their overall wellbeing. Team building is harder without being together, but it is not impossible.

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

RECREATING THE STAFF LOUNGE

We all are lacking interaction with fellow employees. The staff lounge was a sacred place where you could collaborate with colleagues not only on work related items but also social aspects that you have in common. While conducting research, I found that many members no longer have a standard lunch hour due to the missing component of lunch to share with others. This is being addressed in offices where senior management has encouraged employees not to schedule any meetings between 12:00 and 1:00 pm to ensure that their staff is taking a well-deserved break.

Taking it a step further, some offices are forming special interest groups. These **SIGs** are for social and personal interests of the employees. The employees can use the designated break time to meet with their colleagues and discuss common interests such as travel, healthy eating, exercise, and of course, binge worthy TV shows. Some organizations have hired specialists to participate in the special interest group meetings and help drive the conversation such as a book club moderator, a chef to teach a cooking class, etc. In other cases, the staff are sent a box to follow along with the instructor such as supplying the book for book club or a prep kit for the cooking class. The staff are encouraged to select the interest group topics and choose themes.



COMING BACK TO WORK

Depending on the size of your company and the restrictions put in place within your county or district, you may already be back at work. We asked what businesses are doing to support those transitioning back into the life of commuting, sitting at a desk, and being away from the comforts they had gotten used to. The most common response was that schedules are flexible and a 5-day work week in the office is very rare.

It is no secret that transitioning back to work will be challenging. It is important that offices take the tips and tricks that are exemplified in this column to help best support the wellbeing of their staff. That way when it is time to return, the staff will be more secure in the transition.

Diversity and Inclusion Feature Series

The Leadership Role in Diversity and Inclusion

What does organizational leadership in Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) look like and how does it shape the strategic plan and vision for that organization? The Chatter's Amanda Clark spoke with some amazing leaders and gained tremendous insight into how they are creating an organization-wide culture centered around inclusion.

The overall message is that inclusion needs to be a strategy and not a stand-alone effort or a single workplace training. D&I is ongoing and requires constant evaluation and assessment. This is both a top-down and a bottom-up process. The basis for a successful and sustainable strategy stems from the C-suite signaling we are in this together, engaging staff and listening to voices from all levels.

Debbie Pollock-Berry, Chief Human Resources Officer with Save the Children, is currently recruiting to fill the role of Senior Program Director, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. She stressed the importance of bringing on a thought leader who will serve as a partner and carry out their "commitment to act on racial equity". Tracking data and providing regular reports to staff are integral in demonstrating that leadership is accountable, and goals are being taken seriously. Save the Children's commitment to act states, "We are committed to fostering a culture of advocacy and inclusion to help staff speak up, be heard and collectively effect change". Debbie referenced her series of "courageous conversations", relaying that while the uncomfortable conversations may be hard, "on the other side of discomfort is growth".

Gerri Mason Hall, VP of Global Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging at NetApp, stated that the role of a D&I leader is to be a strategist and align with thought partners, keeping a keen eye on practices and engaging personnel at all levels. She shared her approach is "We must think globally and act locally."

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging is an enterprise responsibility.

Examine your data – what does it tell you in terms of representation and equity? When building a solid D&I team, Hall says to focus on individuals who have strong partnerships and are successful at communicating. You need influencers who have passion, can be marketers and serve as champions in their grassroots communities.

Leaders recognize that education is a top priority. Create employee business resource groups, curate content and drive campaigns. Start simply with a book club, research group, lunch and learn – spark conversation!

Vandana Das, Experienced Diversity and Inclusion Practitioner, discussed her current role as consultant for the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and eloquently stated that "every organization is a microcosm of wider society" and your organization needs to reflect society as much as society reflects your organization.

Recognition of diversity yields better business results. Practices must be inclusive, empower people and focus on equity. D&I must be ingrained in every decision you make.

Distribute anonymous surveys to solicit truthful employee response. Act, understand and implement solutions. To drive engagement, invite advocates from each function within your organization, create employee resource groups, and offer a variety of events to attract staff engagement.

>>Continued on next page

**Are you unsure
how to have
conversations
with employees
on Diversity,
Inclusion,
Equity, Race, or
Bias?**



Contact us at 202-744-5233
www.ascensionworldwide.com



continued

Diversity and Inclusion Feature Series

The Leadership Role in Diversity and Inclusion

Karen Gadberry is the VP of People and Culture at Pursuit, an adventure travel company with lodges and attractions spread throughout North America and most recently, Iceland. Their sole mission is to foster a sense of connection with people and place, equally inclusive of staff and guests. Karen stated that diversity and inclusion is "baked into their culture". Pursuit embodies a "Promise to People" philosophy of prioritizing diversity and leading with inclusivity. Their highly collaborative senior team ensures that core values are instilled in everything they do. They view each destination as an opportunity to embrace and foster the culture of that locale; from offering jobs to local and native populations to tailoring experiences unique to that community. Karen summed it up well by saying "Wherever you are, there are stories to be told."

Pursuit is very intentional with their messaging, carefully curating language with inclusivity at top of mind. D&I values are reflected in their internal operations as well. I was fascinated when Karen shared that every employee is encouraged to learn to say hello, please, thank you, and goodbye in as many languages as possible. Dashboard measuring is conducted frequently, examining equity in gender positions and pay for example, and anonymous surveys are used to collect employee data and ensure voices are heard at all levels.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

March is celebrated as Women's History Month, commemorating the contribution that women make to communities, workplaces, governance, culture, and the challenges overcome to fully participate in society. Though it is difficult to believe, just over 100 years ago women in the United States did not have the right to vote. Forty years ago, this year, Sandra Day O'Connor was sworn in as the first female Supreme Court Justice. Only 24 years ago, Madeleine Albright became the first female Secretary of State. And 2021 brings the milestone of the first woman serving as Vice President of the United States. These major accomplishments, and their fairly recent position in history, are important to commemorate and celebrate.

Noting the contribution that women make to our culture, a collaboration to celebrate Women's History Month is offered by the Library of Congress, The Smithsonian Institution, the National Archives, and several other prominent government agencies and historical organizations.

The website www.womenshistorymonth.gov is an excellent and moving tribute to women's history in America and paints a comprehensive portrait of female impact spanning many aspects of life from individual rights, to medicine, to the workplace, to the arts, to government, and beyond. Women's History Month also reminds us that, for all the victories of the last century, many battles for women's rights remain, including pay equality and fair hiring practices. Learning from the past helps bring awareness to issues which remain for women, while progress sets an example for the goals of inclusion for all people, equally; Women's History Month offers an opportunity to more fully understand the past and the future.

Amanda Clark, CMP

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



MEET CONFIDENTLY
IN GRAND RAPIDS
MeetConfidently.com



PCMA Capital Chapter Cookbook

Food, glorious food! It's a part of every special occasion, celebration, holiday and memory of our childhood and times best spent with family and friends. We break bread together to negotiate agreements,



to share our common interests as well as our differences. Food is the universal language that brings us together, it is the common thread that connects all races and nationalities and has no political or geographic boundaries.

The Events and Hospitality Industry is especially tied to food and beverage. It has historically been the foundation around which our meetings and conventions build networking, personal and professional growth, and educational opportunities. During this unprecedented time in our lives, this has been a disruption for us both personally and as a profession.

As a chapter, we have not been able to gather in-person for over a year now, and although we have held tremendously successful virtual programs and offered greatly reduced fees to our members, this continues to have a negative effect on the chapter's finances. Our Capital Chapter Cookbook has afforded us an opportunity to share with each other and connect with our colleagues and friends in a safe and socially distanced way. It is a compilation of all our members' great memories of the best times spent with each other over meals and networking events. By supporting this cookbook we're able to help the chapter financially while allowing us to connect and interact remotely.

Although the goal is to be able to purchase a copy of the cookbook throughout the year, we encourage you to purchase one for yourself or as a gift for your customers now, especially if you have submitted those cherished family recipes. A limited number of books will be printed, so don't lose out on the ability to have a piece of Capital Chapter history. You can order your cookbook(s) [here](#) or on the Capital Chapter website. As always, we are grateful for your continued support and look forward to a time when we can gather and prepare a coveted recipe for each other in the near future.

 Ed Psioda, CHME

for what's NEXT

The future of meetings begins in Aurora. With more than 13,000 guest rooms, 1 million sq. ft. of meeting space, and Rocky Mountain vistas, explore Aurora, the Gateway to the Rockies. Our full-service properties and convention center are ready to welcome your meetings, conventions, and events, with open arms — or an elbow bump. Contact our sales team today to get started.

www.VisitAurora.com/PCMA | 720.571.0384



Advocacy Corner

The Government Relations and Advocacy Committee is gearing up for Global Meeting Industry Day (GMID) on April 8, 2021. We are looking at several ways to advocate for our members including bringing back jobs, saving live events and enabling travel across the globe. We need sound legislation that will benefit our industry in the short term and have a long-lasting effect. U.S. Travel Association stated that mandatory domestic testing policy for air travel "is not workable or warranted". We want support for our local states and counties. They need assistance with vaccine distribution and ensuring unemployment benefits include groups and associations not in the previous aid package.



Join us on April 8, GMID Hill Day, and personally tell your story.

Sandy Yi-Davis,
 Founder and Head of Event Solutions & Design MBA,
 DESEthos Meetings and Events

[Send me back to the beginning!](#)

Global Meetings Industry Day on

April 8, 2021.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#) ←

The perfect meeting space includes the perfect headspace.



1 million square feet of meeting space

25 minutes from Orlando International Airport (MCO)

Over 70,000 places to stay

Hospitality and safety are at the heart of our meetings. Learn more at experiencekissimmee.com/meetings



\$ IT PAYS TO MEET IN KISSIMMEE!

Up to **\$10,000** cash back per meeting

Star for A Day!

"If I could be dropped into a motion picture for a day, I'd pick Under the Tuscan Sun. Why? Um... wine, Italian food, negotiation, home renovations that involve removing walls, eccentric characters, Italian sports cars, medieval flag throwing in tights, and reckonings... it just gives and gives!"

I recently shared this fun fact about myself during a virtual ice-breaker exercise and it generated a lot of spontaneous sharing around the screen. We love learning more about our fellow Capital Chapter members so asked for your answers!

JESSICA PAGONIS

Director of Meeting Operations

The Optical Society

Film: Harry Potter – All of them, in order.

Why: Because it's all so magical and amazing. I would want to be a part of it!

TIFFANY GREEN

Director of Resident Experience and Events at Bozzuto

Young Professional

Film: The Devil Wears Prada

Why: Andrea (Andy) Sachs – I love the lessons on fashion, career goals and life. The experience Andy gets from Miranda's Character and her co-workers is invaluable!

Britt Jackman, CMP, Conferences & Events
 U.S. Green Building Council

How Has Your Job Evolved?

It has been a year since the world as we know it stopped and forced us all to re-evaluate our meetings, our industry, and our careers. A year ago, the meetings and events industry was worrying about which hotel was giving them the best deal, what the next open year a certain hotel may have, and how much will they be charged for a gallon of coffee? All these issues, which now seem so trivial, were our way of life. Frank Gainer, MHS, OTR/L, FAOTA, CMP, CAE, Vice President, Meetings & Events for American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) was no different.

A year ago, Frank was in the middle of planning one of his four annual meetings. He had over 11,000 people registered to attend his annual at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, which of course was bringing up its own challenges as convention center programs sometimes do. Three weeks before his meeting was set to start, Massachusetts Governor Baker put a restriction on all programs forcing Frank to cancel his meeting and refund 11,000 attendees. At the time of cancellation, the discussion of virtual was brought up. Like many of us, AOTA had never produced a virtual meeting before. There were obstacles and challenges everyone faced, and Frank and his team were not prepared to bring the caliber of their in-person meeting to a virtual setting.

After cancellation, many of AOTA's presenters were willing to record their presentations or host live courses in the weeks and months to follow. Frank and his team saw it as their opportunity to grow professionally and worked to develop an in-home learning center for these front-line workers. They found a virtual platform that worked for them and took 150 presentations from their in-person meeting and started to hold webinars, offering at least two presentations a day from April through August. These presentations were presented live or recorded and then available in AOTA's store for on-demand viewership. AOTA saw this as an opportunity and created free COVID-19 courses for which members and non-members were able to register. On the first webinar they had over 7,000 registrants. These courses produced 25,000 plus non-members who were registering for AOTA's webinars. Some of them have now been converted to new members.

During the fall, AOTA executed three conferences virtually. One of the events doubled its typical attendance and another tripled. While Frank has the numbers and commitment, it has not been without its challenges. In learning firsthand, occupational therapists cannot

rely solely on artificial intelligence to transcribe and understand the verbiage offered on a recorded presentation for closed captioning. This cost AOTA hours of cleaning up and was a painful experience. While maximizing exhibitors and sponsorships has proven to be a pain point for many of us, Frank is working with his department to uncover new ways to solicit and ensure ROI for everyone.

Now a year later from when Frank had to cancel his Boston program, AOTA is prepared to take it virtually. In April, AOTA will host their full conference virtually spanning over 18 days and offering 600 sessions including posters. This decision was not easy; an in-person event receives over 3,000 submissions.

As the vaccine is rolling out across the country, Frank's members, being front-line healthcare workers, are the first to receive. Frank is hopeful their Education Summit in October will be able to meet in-person. They know they will have to go hybrid, but Frank is looking forward to the opportunity for he and his team to grow. When asking Frank to reflect on the past year and how he transitioned to the "new normal" he says, "He is very proud of how we rose to the occasion."

Rebecca Kane, CMP, DES, Meetings Manager
U.S. Grains Council



FRANK GAINER, AOTA

Hybrid - The New Normal



The arrival of COVID-19 vaccines has generated a lot of debate around events returning to normal. Almost all recent research points to event marketers pivoting most events to hybrid models. In the "new normal," the attendee experience will move from "in the ballroom" to "around the world." While the presentation may move back to a live stage, live attendance will no longer be the single driving factor.

WHY? THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS:

- 1 Hybrid models provide event planners the flexibility to lay the groundwork for both scenarios and increase attendance as well as revenue.
- 2 Hybrid allows the attendee to drive their preferred experience.
- 3 2/3 of event planners are actively moving ahead with hybrid models and consider it a competitive advantage. Planning for hybrid mitigates competitive risk.
- 4 Hybrid gets you one step closer to physical.
- 5 Hybrid is here to stay. Some attendees won't or can't attend, and some will not attend at all costs, but all of them are becoming fluent in virtual events. Corporate travel is far from resuming, and most corporations have mandates against live events for the next 6-12 months or more. These factors require a hybrid approach indefinitely to address multiple attendee experiences.
- 6 Hybrid provides shared experiences between physical and digital attendees, resulting in higher engagement and unified analytics.
- 7 Hybrid provides increased ROI by going far beyond the physical headcount, extending the shelf life of the event, and is environmentally friendly.
- 8 The advent of 5G provides unprecedented reach and experience improvements.

hive.

**Sign up for a live demo
of Event EQ's new
virtual event environment!**

For more info, email
rebecca.ramsey@eventeq.com

A winning hybrid strategy must include virtual capabilities that replicate face-to-face interaction, build recognition and online communities. We must optimize content for all the ways attendees choose to consume it while accommodating shorter attention spans. Bandwidth will be as important as venue capacities. Engagement tools must now connect the live and virtual audience. Production budgets must accommodate both formats. Beyond the attendee experience, considerations like contactless check-in/ badge printing, consolidated analytics, integrating the remote attendee into the live attendee-presenter interaction must be top of mind.

Think more TV, less conference.

BJ Singh, President & CEO
Event EQ

Member Makers Showcase

Show Us Your Skills!

Calling all DIY-ers, makers and creators! We are innovating new ways to make connections and looking for opportunities to get to know our fellow chapter members better. We already know you are talented event producers, but what else is everyone making?

For me, DIYing is genetic, born out of the combined traits of thrift and creativity I inherited from my mom and grandmother. For many in past generations, "necessity was the mother of all invention" and "doing it yourself" was the only way. In my case, the DIY part is secondary to my addiction to yard sales, thrift & consignment stores. The "thrill of the hunt" comes first. I never know what I'm going to find. When I do find something, that's when the DIY instinct comes into play since it's rare to find a secondhand item that's exactly as you want it. It's all about repurposing using your DIY tools of choice. Mine typically are a can of spray paint, a staplegun and a roll of nail head trim!

I've even repurposed food...ok not food...but shells from food. My husband and I are big oyster eaters as you can see by the pile of shells in our backyard. It's not just a pile...it's a pile of PROJECTS! One of which hangs on our bathroom wall.

Carly Bushong, CMP, Director of Meetings & Events with Urban Land Institute, has DIY skills that benefit people and pets! Just a small can of chalk paint and wood stain transformed an antique table into a modern sitting area in her home from where she can watch her pup Sookie enjoy the results of her other repurposing skills.

"FOR ME, DIY-ING IS GENETIC, BORN OUT OF THE COMBINED TRAITS OF THRIFT AND CREATIVITY I INHERITED FROM MY MOM AND GRANDMOTHER."



Carly shared "Many recyclables such as small boxes or an empty water bottle can be repurposed into a new dog toy if they have treats hidden in them! Empty peanut butter or yogurt containers also make a fun snack from recyclables. Plain yogurt, peanut butter, canned pumpkin, chicken broth and sweet potato all make great frozen treats.

Here's Sookie, sitting atop one of Carly's custom creations made from an inexpensive yard of fleece from a fabric store.

Whether a long-time hobby, a home-office refresh, or simply the need to save some money has motivated you to try your hand at a DIY project, we'd love to show your personal creations in future Chatter issues.

Email us at pcma.capital.com@gmail.com.

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

Contracts Refreshed

In a response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, meeting, event industry leaders and hotel professionals have found themselves rethinking contract verbiage for hotels and contract service providers.

Many event professionals have language they prefer in their contracts and third-party agreements. Commissionable and fee-based companies work to protect their clients with the best negotiated clauses possible.

I queried industry professionals and received great input from two trusted colleagues, GERALYN KRIST, CMP, Global Account Executive with ConferenceDirect, and JOAN EISENSTODT, Eisenstodt Associates LLC, a meeting and hospitality consultant.

These considerations are not inclusive. Neither of the contributors nor I are legal professionals. This is meant to spark conversation about what you will want to consider negotiating for future meeting and event contracts. As always, confer with hospitality legal counsel before attempting to negotiate any clauses that may be new to you.

FRUSTRATION OF CONTRACT/PURPOSE

One of the most touted phrases in new contracting is "frustration of purpose". This contractual point has been used (successfully and unsuccessfully) in a variety of ways in the past and individuals are exploring what they will look like in the future.

Include a statement of purpose in your contract. This would be a paragraph or two about the purpose of the contracted event (education, networking, continuing education credits). When this information is provided, it could add teeth to a discussion about the impossibility/impracticability of performance and frustration of contract/purpose.

DUTY OF CARE

Include staff/performance clauses in every contract. Ask: Is the hotel or other venue testing staff and contractors who enter the hotel for COVID-19? How will the venue handle an outbreak at the property? If a guest is isolated/quarantined, who pays for the isolation expenses (room, food, and beverage)?

Consider adding a cleaning clause to your contract, using CDC, State and Local Health Department guidelines as a template for your verbiage, and/or one that the hotel/venue has created. [IAVM](#) is an excellent resource for more information.

Make a list of your questions to be considered as you think about a duty of care provisions.

CAPACITIES AND HISTORICAL EXPECTATIONS

It is expected future meetings will be smaller either because occupancy capacity is restricted or desired by participants and/or sponsors or because participants' travel budgets have decreased. Include a review clause for your contract with solid timelines and measurements to discuss capacity required or desired and conditions under which they will be governed. Be realistic! A contract should protect ALL parties in the contract.

REBOOKING CLAUSES ("LIFT AND SHIFT")

In the event a program is not able to occur by no fault of the group (i.e., COVID-19 made holding a meeting impossible) the client has a specific number of days to shift events to alternate dates, if available and agreed to; this clause should also include the conditions for deposits.

DETACHED MEETING FACILITIES

Include an "unavailability of other facilities" clause if you are using any additional facilities such as a convention center or other venue. This may allow for termination of your hotel contract should your primary event space become unavailable.

ADA COMPLIANCE

These clauses should always be included and reviewed. With the new contactless expectations, it will be important to highlight how a hotel will handle specific needs of persons with disabilities.

OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

After a year of losses, convention services providers will likely negotiate contracts well in advance of previous timelines. Think through and be prepared to respond. Will you agree to contract transportation provider, speaker, decorator, and destination management company services more than twelve months in advance of the event's first day? What expectations will you have/agree to for that contract?

COMMUNICATE

Everyone agreed that open and honest communication is critical. If your main contact becomes unavailable, immediately request another contact even if the expectation is that yours will return. Be diligent until you have an established relationship in place.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

Having a professional who can assist with contract negotiations provides added strength to your team. These professionals typically have years of contracting experience, long-standing relationships with leaders at the national and hotel level in addition to the destination management organizations. Third party agencies will leverage relationships to strengthen contracts and be an advocate when any conflicts with providers arise. Most importantly, contract with a hospitality attorney. Regardless of how good any meeting practitioner is, legal counsel will know best!

Expect changes, spend a healthy amount of time reviewing your contract and be prepared with a response about what you will need/allow for when unexpected circumstances arise. Above all, keep the conversation open, honest, and reflective of both the vendor and your organization's needs.

Tanna Pearman, Meeting Broker
Meetings Made Easy

PCMA Capital Chapter Resource Guide

The PCMA Capital Chapter is a strong community built of individuals who care for one another. Should you know of anyone in our community whose circumstances have changed due to the pandemic, we want to ensure that they continue to receive information about education and networking opportunities. Collecting updated contact information will ensure that everyone continues to receive emails and updates from the Chapter. Please send information to **Vicki Johnson at vicki@vjmeetings.com**.

Below are links and other information to assist members with career opportunities, scholarships, and meal support.

JOB SEARCH:

PCMA - www.pcma.org

Under Job Search, you can seek job openings, have a professional resume writer review yours and post your resume.

ASAE - www.asaecenter.org

Click Find A Job under Career for the latest association positions available.

Associations Now Newsletter -

<https://associationsnow.com/newsletter/>

Sign up for ASAE's Associations Now Newsletter which lists current positions available in the industry and get a pulse of what's driving the world of associations.

CEO Update - <https://www.associationjobs.com/>

You can search jobs, have a professional resume writer review yours and upload your resume.

MPI - www.mpi.org

Under Resources, click on Career Center which will have job postings.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

PCMA - <https://www.pcma.org/scholarships/>

Scholarships are available through the PCMA Foundation for tuition, PCMA membership, complimentary event registration and certifications.

MEAL SUPPORT:

Hook Hall Helps aids area hospitality workers by giving them meals and supplies provided through the generous support of the greater Washington, DC community. Those interested in receiving family meals and supply kits, must pre-register. HHH asks that you bring a pay stub or shift schedule from the hospitality establishment you were or are working at ensuring support goes directly to the industry. These kits will be distributed on Mondays at Hook Hall in Washington, DC and on Thursdays at The Freshman in Arlington, VA from 3-5 PM. You will receive 3 days of fully prepared meals, along with a supply kit with dry goods (toilet paper, granola bars, etc.).

Register for **MONDAYS** here →

Register for **THURSDAYS** here →

We will continue to update this guide so be sure to visit us at:

<https://capital.pcma.org/community-service>

Melissa Edwards, CMP, CEO | Chief Event Organizer
MEvents Global LLC

PCMA Capital Chapter Marketing Committee is Revving up for 2021!

Creating community engagement on the Capital Chapter's social media platforms with **#membermondays**, **#tipstuesdays**, **#wellnesswednesdays**, **#throwbackthursday** and **#fantasticfridays**, and we plan to keep on providing engaging and relevant content. In February, we presented our newest campaign, **#MakeDifferenceCampaign**, which focuses on how to give back in your own unique ways and to become more involved in charitable activities. To find out more, please visit us on our social media platforms. Review them and engage with us by offering your feedback, photos, and industry insights. We are always looking to improve our content, so share your creative ideas, and you may be highlighted in one of our postings! This will be a transformative year, and with your help, it will be one of the best!

Please visit us on:

 www.facebook.com/PCMACC/

 @PCMACC

 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/pcma-capital-chapter>

 @pcmacapitalchapter

Chickens, Turtles, and Iguanas... Oh My!

We reached out to our Chapter community to find out if any members had any exotic pets to feature in the the Chatter, and boy, did our members deliver. Meet some of the exotic pets in the Capital Chapter family.

You may have cool pets, but do they provide you breakfast every morning? Leah Lewis, Director, Meetings, American Gear Manufacturers Association, has a flock of six chickens and they each lay one brown egg daily, except for Rocket the rooster whose job is to protect the girls while they free range. They love to follow her around when she is outside and get along great with her dogs. Fun fact, roosters crow all day long, not just first thing in the morning, and it is not uncommon to hear one in the background when she is on a Zoom meeting. It is a great icebreaker!

Brittany Tyrrell has a 4-year-old Leopard Tortoise, named Shell-a (kind of like Sheila but emphasis on the SHELL). Native to South Africa, Brittany and her family have created a climate similar for her tortoise in their garage. Shella loves the outdoors here in Virginia, but she is a Summer girl! She is currently weighing in at 14 lbs., but the vet anticipates that she will be around 22 lbs. Though Brittany's 16-month-old daughter may not yet know it, Shella may live up to 100 years old, so she may also get the pleasure of owning an exotic pet!



Brittany also shared a picture of her Panther Chameleon, who recently passed away. "He was too cool not to mention and brought so much joy to our family with his beautiful self," said Tyrrell.

It is evident that pets come in all forms and bring so much joy and love to their families. Just ask Leah and Brittany!

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



THE CHATTER IS PUBLISHED BY

PCMA Capital Chapter

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, DES, CDMP
Vice President of Global Accounts,
ConferenceDirect

CONTENT EDITORS

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

Edward Bagsic, CMP
Manager, Conventions VIP Events and Budgets
National Business Aviation Association

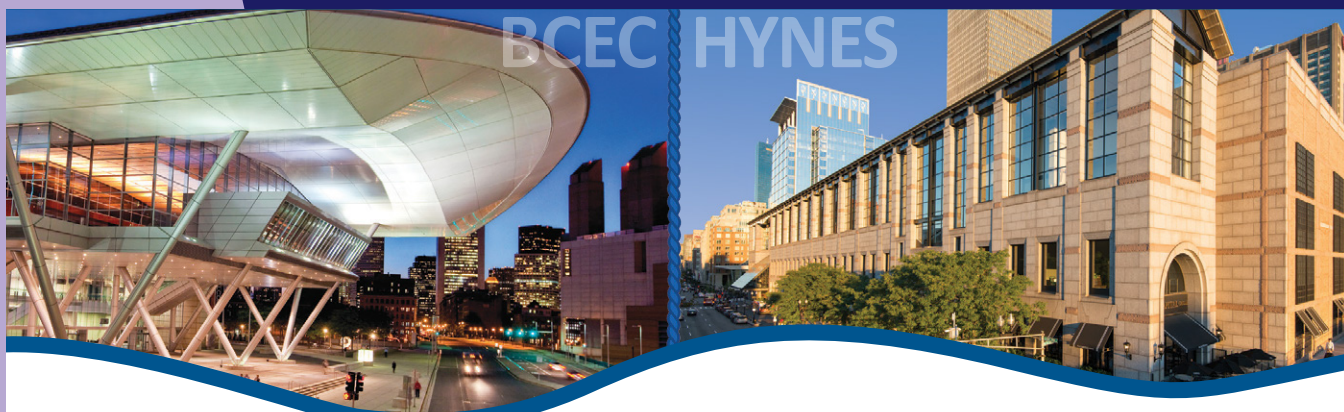
PRODUCTION EDITORS

Anna Genova
Senior Graphic Designer

CHATTER INFO



CAPITAL CHAPTER OF PCMA
673 Potomac Station Dr., #801
Leesburg, VA 20176



Two *Flagship* Convention Centers Leading the Way



Boston's AIPC GOLD-Certified Convention Centers.

No other city offers two industry-leading convention facilities – the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center and the Hynes Convention Center. Both provide flexible, world-class exhibit and meeting space that easily adapts to your needs. Plus award-winning services and state-of-the-art technology, including free building-wide Wi-Fi. So you can plan your event your way, setting your sights on success as your vision comes to life.

Schedule a site visit or learn more at SignatureBoston.com or 877-393-3393.

Boston. Bringing Great Events to Light.



Remarkable experiences.
Imagination realized.

MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY