the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter Thoughts and Opinions from Convening Leaders

We reached out to several of our chapter members who attended PCMA Convening Leaders in Austin for their thoughts and take-a ways from this year's very successful conference in Austin!

What was your biggest take away?

"The biggest impact of PCMA was creating a culture of collaboration. There were opportunities to connect, share, and learn at every turn. Learning Labs, Tech Central, and Brain dates allowed so many chances to exchange ideas with other event professionals." Amy O'Malley, CMP, Director of Sales, Spotme

"The focus on emergency management. I attended two sessions on this subject, and although I have what I feel is a comprehensive plan, the charts and simplification of distributing important information was a great take away." Windy Christner, Senior Director, Meetings and Expositions at American Pharmacists Association

"Convening Leaders was a good reminder that conferences need to have a F2F component and an integrated digital component. Not two separate items, but integrated. Aspects that PCMA did like the MashUp Studio and the Convening Leaders Rebroadcast in Asia on local time with smaller F2F events gathered in Asia are examples of integrated but unique experiences." Bill Reed, FASAE, CMP, Senior Director, Meetings and Community Engagement, American Society of Hematology & Immediate Past Chair, PCMA Board of Directors

Which educational session resonated with you & why?

"I enjoyed the PCMA Business School session on Strategic Thinking. It was helpful to review business models like SWOT, Porters Five Forces, and BCG Portfolio Matrix - that can be applied to any situation. The event tech space can often feel like a startup environment, so taking a strategic approach to business challenges is vital. I'll definitely be using this session education in the upcoming year." Amy O'Malley

"Erik Qualman session on influence and success in a digital world was my favorite. He did a perfect job of combining message, video, humor and audience engagement to teach his message." Windy Christner

"Sadly to say, if it did not happen in the Main Stage or the luncheon room, I did not get to attend any of the sessions. This resonated with me actually because it has called my attention for how much we schedule our PCMA President during the meeting so that they can't attend sessions either. I will consume

most of the content by watching the webcasts on weekends between now and the Spring thaw." Bill Reed

"The Opening Main Stage because of Matthew McConaughey of course! Just kidding, but it did get everyone's attention! I enjoyed Rachel Botsman's conversation on trust as it relates to the new idea of a sharing economy and new companies using digital platforms to bring people together. Companies are now creating connected communities where the 'new currency is trust between strangers'. I call an Uber and get in a stranger's car and stay at a stranger's apartment when out of town. It is bizarre when you think of it that way. I didn't realize just how much trust I put in to these companies due to the convenience. It will be interesting to see what other industries will be taken over by a digital platform and convenience. How will I interact with strangers next?" Erica Critzer, Regional Director of Sales, Mid-Atlantic & Northeast Region, VisitDallas

What stood out at a networking reception, educational session, or lunch that was unique and perhaps you would use at your own meeting?

"PCMA and Visit Austin certainly pulled off the big wow factor. Having Matthew McConaughey surprise the audience in the Opening General Session definitely gave us something to talk about. It reminded me of the importance of the element of surprise and delight. It doesn't have to be a celebrity or huge expense, but a grand gesture can go a long way." Amy O'Malley

"Austin House was a resounding success, and I can't imagine that any future host city won't do something similar. The live music was amazing, and the Opening Reception was one of the best I've attended. The first day's lunch featuring items without the 5 most common allergic foods was beautifully done." Windy Christner

"All right, all right, all right! The welcome by Matthew McConaughey really wowed everyone. It was amazing that PCMA, Freeman and everyone involved was able to keep it a secret. Also, conference registration at the airport was a home run! It was the buzz from the start of the meeting through the last day. Several people were already trying to figure out how to implement it. Great customer service." Karin Soyster Fitzgerald, CMP, CAE, Chief Operations Officer and Deputy Executive Director, International Association of Fire Chiefs. •

by Margaret Miller, CMP, Strategic Sales Executive, Experient

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



Message from the Board

Jim Kelley Vice President, Industry Relations/Association Channel Sales, PRG 2016 Capital Chapter President-Elect



As I reflect on the Capital Chapter's The calendar tells us that January 1st is the start of the year, but, for me the opening day of Convening Leaders is really when the year begins. Time to connect with old friends and meet new friends, begin collaborating for success and growth and most of all, a time a learn. PCMA, against a backdrop of the fabulous destination of Austin, did not disappoint.

As the week progressed I became increasingly proud of the Capital Chapter. Not because of the amount of members we had in attendance but because of the leadership, involvement and professionalism of our chapter. Beginning with the Chapter Leader Workshop, to PCMA U, to the number of Capital Chapter members honored as part of this years 20 In Their Twenties, our involvement in the education as panelists, speakers and moderators, and the nomination of a number of Capital Chapter members for this year's Visionary Awards, our members truly are walking the talk as it relates to living our Chapter Mission, Vision and Core Values.

The takeaways for me were many. From Rachel Botsman, "Trust is at the core of all we do, particularly as it relates to connection and collaboration." Dan Goods, "Take meaningful insights and intelligence from other industries and find ways to apply them to our space." Issac Lidsky, "Don't 'awfulize', don't let others command your destiny and most importantly live your life with eyes wide open."

Data and business intelligence are going to be integrated into all we do as shown by the number of sessions focused on this area and the fact that PCMA's first ever 'Shark Tank for Event Technology' took place. According to Dahlia El Gazzer, key facilitator in this years Tech Central, "This year is all about helping meeting professionals make sense of their data. There's so much information out there, and organizations need tools that can bring all of it into one place to make their events more efficient."

My head is still spinning...however I am still smiling, more energized than ever and ready to make 2017 a great year for our industry, our chapter, and our members. I would like to leave you with one final thought compliments of Matthew McConaughey-"...know the difference between unity and uniformity." We do not have to be the same to be united. •







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Convening-Leaders-In-Review | 5

Giving Back - PCMA's Hospitality **Helping Hands at PCMA**

In the hospitality industry, we all strive to make an impact on people's lives. Hospitality Helping Hands (HHH) is a natural extension of that spirit at every Convening Leaders. Community members are always impressed when they see a large number of meeting professionals who arrive early to the conference and rise early to give back to the community hosting us. Plus, this gives PCMA members another wonderful way to extend their network by bonding with other professionals with a similar desire for community service.

This year, we learned about the great work that Sammy's House does. Established in 1999 as a home-based child care center for children with special needs, the demand for such a program from both parents and therapeutic professionals was so great that a nonprofit organization was formed. To that end, the organization opened a much larger child development center in 2002. There were many teary eyes when Sammy's House video ended as you could see the love, support, and encouragement its staff provide these remarkable children.

After a wonderful breakfast at the JW Marriot Austin, over 150 meeting professionals boarded buses to Sammy's House. Each table during breakfast had been assigned a specific task such as constructing new shelving units, cleaning, painting, assembling toys, building a shed to hold children's adapted bicycles and so much more. Once we arrived at the center, the teams divided and worked on the various projects for two and half hours. As some volunteers completed areas, they would assist other teams. It was truly a great example of collaboration in our industry.

When all the projects were completed, PCMA and HHH's sponsors presented Sammy's House with a check for \$9,350 which will go a long way to continue the incredible mission of helping these special children.

HHH was sponsored by Global Experience Specialists Inc. (GES), the founding partner of PCMA's Giving Good initiative, as well as the Marriott Convention & Resort Network and Experient, A Maritz Global Events Company. •

by Will Trokey, National Sales Manager, Visit Charlotte

PCMA Business School: Maximizing Mental Agility

When I read the description for this session, it caught my eye. "Improve problem solving abilities and make people around you smarter." As an individual who loves puzzles and the challenge to grow in knowledge provided outside of a traditional classroom, I was intrigued. Professor Art Markman is a true educator, providing information in a way that is appealing, structured, and at times, comical.

He began by debunking the myths of how to best measure intelligence and articulating that effective thinking can be broken down into three steps. The first, is to develop good habits. In the age of smart phones, it is so commonplace to interrupt an action to check email, update social media, or respond to a seemingly urgent text message. However, this attempt at multi-tasking truly disrupts our productivity on the task or action at hand. So, effective thinkers have good habits in time management and restraint; following a consistent set of positive actions. Secondly, he described that these habits should be used to maximize our knowledge. We should continuously ask the "why" question to get at the root of an issue or a description. In bringing the attendee back to the simplistic question of a 5 year old, he encouraged the attendees to consider the importance of asking "why?" instead of just accepting descriptions as fact. The question "why" leads into the third step that was described, which is the ability to use the knowledge gained. With our reliance on smartphones already mentioned, it is imperative now more than ever to exercise our memory in order to use the knowledge that we have gained. If smartphones are our distraction from learning, google is our replacement from gaining knowledge.

In actually learning and actively engaging our memory, we will become much more effective thinkers. We are humans, not machines, thus we have the capacity to look at problems or situations in a different angle or light. In his closing remarks, Professor Markman encouraged attendees to not "think different" but "think about different things." •

by Brigid Greaney, James Madison University '17

Taco Trot 5K at PCMA



This year's aptly named Taco Trot Fun Run/Walk promised industry professionals a tasty tortilla filled with breakfast goodies; but, only if they would drag themselves out of bed early the morning after Party with a Purpose. The Annual PCMA Education Foundation Fundraiser attracted more than 100 people who enjoyed a walk/trot/run on the beautiful Butler Trail along the Colorado River and an opportunity to support the Foundation. Rachel Riggs, Sales Manager with the Vancouver Convention and Visitors Bureau, helped to plan the event this year and led the early risers in a pre-walk/run stretch with some help from an Austin running outfitter, Luke's Locker.

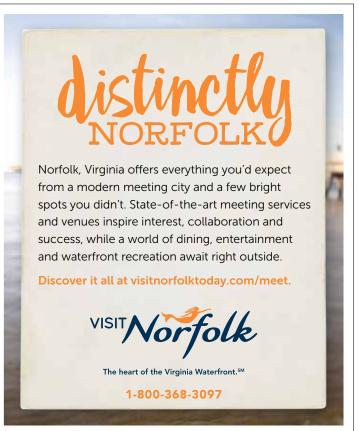
With a good warm-up to battle the chilly start, everyone headed to the trail, some walking, others meandering and over achievers fighting to be first in the taco line. Organizers were pleased to have warmer weather the morning of the 5K and participants enjoyed a spectacular sun rise, several rowing crews on the river, and a peek at the river wildlife while snapping a few photos of Austin's Skyline. The 3.2 Mile walk/run started and wrapped up at the Radisson Hotel Suites Downtown Austin where all participants received a first place prize of **BREAKFAST TACOs!**

This event encourages a healthy lifestyle, supports a good cause and creates additional opportunities to spend time with colleagues from all over the country! It is designed for all skill levels and not set up as a race; I highly recommend you consider joining next year in Nashville! •-🗕 by Tanna Pearman, National Sales Manager, Silver Legacy Reno











International Meetings & Events

There is no argument that the daily routine of meeting planning is anything but routine. There is so much to take into account these days when planning an event anywhere let alone when you have a border to cross. So how does one navigate the waters of an international program?

Identify a Location

Identifying a location that can meet your group needs not only from accessibility and deliverables standpoint, but a location that may align with your organizational overarching objectives. By this we mean that if you are in the Life Sciences sector, there are some key international destinations that have the depth of knowledge and reach to support your program with key education opportunities and speakers aligned to your conference objective. For example, in Canada some of the top medical universities exist with researchers and faculty able to present to your group.

Do Your Homework

If you have identified a suitably aligned destination, take the time to look at their government website as well as look at what the US State Department may have available on that destination. Is it a "friendly" country that welcomes US and International delegates, or has there been unrest which may pose your attendees some potential obstacles? Working closely with a DMO or CVB can assist you in answering these and many other questions you have.

Enhancing the Experience

Ask questions and research the destination to best understand what will work for your attendee experience. You may be pleasantly surprised that there is so much more to offer your attendees from the cultural diversity and immersion experience of an international experience.

Take the time to explore the rich culture of the location you are considering. The rewards can far outweigh the time invested in considering an international destination for your next meeting. Happy Travels. •

--- Michael Shannon, CMP, Director of Business Development, Northeast, Business Events Canada

My Experience as a Capital Chapter Scholarship Winner

A few months ago I had accepted the fact that I wasn't going to be able to attend Convening Leaders in Austin. Funding at my association was tight, and professional development budgets were the first to be cut. Though I had done my due diligence, applied internally months in advance, selected applicable educational sessions and waxed poetic about the great connections I would make on behalf of our organization, there was no money to cover my expenses. It was about that time that I applied to attend as a Capital Chapter scholarship winner. Convening Leaders was one of the most important events of the year, and I wasn't going to miss out if there was anything I could do about it! Winning the Capital Chapter scholarship gave me the opportunity to attend when I wouldn't have been able to otherwise, and I decided that I wasn't going to waste a second of my time in Austin.

This was my third Convening Leaders and I noticed that I approached this conference differently as a scholarship winner than I did in the past. I downloaded the mobile app early and created my educational schedule in advance so I didn't miss out on any of my "must attend" sessions. I visited Tech Central, checked out the Brain Dates area, and walked every inch of the convention center soaking up ideas I could implement at my own conference. My notes from the conference included big and inspiring ideas like "don't' stop asking why," "resourcefulness is more important than resources" and "know what you want." Following Isaac Lidsky (who we've now booked for our conference) I was swept away in the Nashville duo that closed the conference. I let myself be surprised and delighted by the small but effective touches that make a conference experience: the bacon snack, the pedicab attendant who welcomed me to the city, cycled me to dinner, and wouldn't accept a tip. I left Austin feeling as though I didn't leave one stone left unturned, and reaffirmed for myself that I loved what I do and that I wouldn't have rather been anywhere else. • -– by Beth O'Brien, CMP

Association of Clinical Research Professionals

Emerging Professional Empowerment Capital & Chesapeake Chapter at Convening Leaders

Convening Leaders brought great content, opportunities, and experiences for everyone ranging from veteran professionals to emerging professionals and students. The program accommodated all learning styles, but put a focus on emerging professionals. There were hands-on learning opportunities, mentorships, and content enabling advancement in industry knowledge. Main Stage topics included motivation to advance oneself personally, and to be the change that the industry constantly undergoes. There was a push for emerging professionals to realize that they are the generation with the strongest impact on serving ever-evolving attendee segmentation, as the industry continues to transform digitally and become more sustainable.

Speakers selected this year applied new techniques that sparked ideas for attendees. One speaker demonstrated recording herself for her own podcast, while also being recorded by PCMA. The different platforms kept the audience, particularly millennials, engaged. With all the new and constant development in this digital age, keeping an audience involved is becoming increasingly difficult. The use of devices has changed the environment of meetings; attendees can communicate with both attendees and non-attendees at all times. Emerging professionals must address these realities, and develop a solution.

A recurring theme was collaboration and enhancement of the attendee experience, enabling them to connect in a beneficial way, such as using mobile apps and online collaboration tools like session polling. Another theme was adopting a more digital approach, which also supports a precedence for sustainable practices. The Main Stage session presented topics on sustainability and how millennials have the greatest impact on saving the environment.

PCMA's inclusive environment enabled creativity as the base of discussion. Attendees were not segmented into tracks, and topics supported the understanding that planners are constantly adapting to change. As risks evolve, veteran planners look to emerging professionals for advice on attendees' digital capabilities; emerging professionals then look to those more experienced to develop best practices. The outcome for emerging professional attendees was a sense of empowerment, inclusion, and respect.

> = by Christina Pino, CMP, Assistant Manager Conference Logistics, Stellato Meeting Solutions

Reception Recap

PCMA Convening Leaders did not disappoint. From the live music and entertainment, to the amazing educational sessions and overall conference experience, we were exposed to the culture and creativity that is Austin, TX. Reflecting back on the week, one of the most memorable parts was the company. The Capital and Chesapeake Chapter Reception was a perfect kick off to the many sleepless nights ahead. Trinity Hall welcomed a sold out crowd, and the space was filled with networking, laughter and some music from the Argyles to get everyone up and grooving. When the "Cap-Chap" wasn't dancing, there was a scavenger hunt with AccorHotels, intended to share more about their brand and allow industry professionals the chance to win some cool prizes. It would be impossible to talk about this reception without at least acknowledging the delicious food. Fried chicken, mac and cheese, chili brined pork sliders. You name it – we ate it.

As the reception was coming to a close, we heard from our new fearless leader, Diane Kovats, CAE, CMP, from the International Society of Computational Biology and Krystine St. Michael Bussiere, CMP, of the Connecticut Convention Center and also the newly elected president of the Chesapeake Chapter. Both presidents shared a few remarks about their chapter and the work they look forward to completing during this year.

All in all, the Capital and Chesapeake Reception was the perfect start to an amazing conference and the beginnings of an even better year. 2017 will be filled with innovative meetings, events and even better partnerships cultivated from this successful evening.

A special thank you goes out to the evening's sponsors, AccorHotels, The Expo Group and PSAV for their generous support! Let's also raise a glass to the Austin CVB for planning and executing a truly unforgettable week. •

> by Kelly Ferrante, Senior Conference and Meetings Manager, NACAC









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Member Spotlights

Spotlight on a Planner

Anton Ramus Vice President I National Accounts -DC/Chicago Connections Housing



Like many, Anton (who grew up in Europe and Miami) entered the industry by accident as he was studying economics and went to visit his cousin at the University of Hawaii where she was studying Hospitality Management and having the time of her life! So, Anton attended one of her Hotel Management classes and LOVED it! He finished his degree in economics

and moved to Hospitality Management at Florida International University (FIU). The rest is history!

Anton's advice for balancing personal and professional life is to "Learn to take care of yourself". He was told long ago by a wise woman, his mother, "Work to live, don't live to work. We live once and we must make the best of each day; living is a gift". When at work, give 100%, but at the end of the day go back to your life and live it, enjoy your family and friends. Life goes by fast and you must enjoy every moment of it! For fun Anton loves to travel and explore new places, enjoy foods of different regions and spend time with friends and family whether at brunch or sharing a cocktail. He loves going to the movies, spending time outdoors and working out at the gym. Anton definitely has a terrific zest for life! •

– by Shaun Mathewson, Key Account Director Global Sales at InterContinental Hotels Group

Spotlight on a Supplier Eric Hotard President & CEO Event Transportation Systems

Eric has been a PCMA member since 1989. He values his membership because the local DC area events and annual meeting allow him to meet people from all facets of the industry, which helps him grow and stay on top of industry trends. Each year, before Convening Leaders begins, he hosts an annual New Orleans themed "Ragin Cajun" party (Super Boil) for his customers and friends, where he and one of his co-hosts cook the entire meal for more than 100 people! Sharing some of his southern



hospitality is one of the many ways he's able to show appreciation for the people who have helped him succeed.

Eric started at a young age working in his family transportation business, Hotard Coaches, based in New Orleans as a mechanic and cross country driver. He gained his education in the real world and learned the entrepreneurial skills he needed to launch his own transportation management company, Event Transportation Systems, based in the DC area. Eric noted, "I think the experience of working my way up the food chain of a family business gave me a unique skill set, because I understand the perspective of every person I work with from operations to customers."

When asked about the best piece of advice he's received, he said his parents taught him to "always treat others with respect because you never know when you will cross paths again." In turn, he offers the following advice for his peers in the industry. "Get involved in industry organizations to build relationships, and always pay attention to trends so you can add value for your customers."

You can find Eric boating and fishing most weekends, and he also enjoys golf and bike riding. He has son who graduated last year with a Masters degree in mechanical engineering and lives in Houston. •

—by Jennifer Haire, CMP, National Center for State Courts



Advocacy Corner

2017 Government Relations and Advocacy Committee

The Government Relations & Advocacy Committee is looking forward to an exciting year! Christine Frye and I have set goals to increase the committee's interaction with other advocacy groups and participation in events such as ASAE Association Day (March 14-15, 2017) as well as IAEE Hill Day (June 7, 2017). We will also be reaching out to additional volunteers that may be able to assist us with our ongoing advocacy efforts.

We are very excited that Annette Suriani will be our Champion for Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID) April 6, 2017! She was an integral part of 2016's success (spearheaded by the incredibly multi-talented Matthew Fox with Meeting Management Services) which was an overwhelming success! Reboot will be another great opportunity for the Government Relations and Advocacy Committee to interact with the industry.

We hope that our efforts will continue to stimulate your passion for the Meetings Industry and we look forward to engaging with all of you! •

Chair: Rosa Mendoza-Friedheim, CASE, CDMP, Regional Director of Sales, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau Co-Chair: Christine Frye, Sales Representative, National Trade Production



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Please join us for these upcoming events. Visit our chapter website for details and to register: www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital

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with Curation, Content & Choice Wednesday, March 8, 3:00 - 6:00 PM

Register: http://bit.ly/030817

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Jointly presented by PCMA Capital Chapter & MPI

Potomac Chapter Thursday, April 6

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