

the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter

## Planners Deepen Understanding of Unions to their Benefit

Conventions would struggle to come to life were it not for unions. The skilled labor in each major convention city waiting to move in your event is vital to the continuation of business.

Understanding a union's role in the creation of your trade show or meeting helps in the convention planning process. Being aware of recent changes can improve communications between planners, exhibitors and supplier partners.

Start by questioning which unions have jurisdiction at your site and which tasks they each perform. Some cities require two different unions to perform the same task of one union in other cities, which affects costs to you and your exhibitors. For example, delivering a skirted table might be two separate unions; A/V equipment delivery and install often require two as well.

Next, ask about holidays and work hours for each union, as a misunderstanding could create unbudgeted costs. Not all unions within the same city acknowledge the same holidays; know who is on double time and who is not. A recent trend among unions emphasizing customer service is to shift straight time to later in the day – a big benefit when your trade show breaks at 4 pm.



Unions across the country, most notably in Chicago and Philadelphia, have created friendlier service level agreements – a much more effective way to communicate the rules and manage expectations. A list of “you can't do X” has a negative tone, whereas a list of Exhibitor Rights positioned as to what exhibitors can do translates into improved service.

General service contractors can help communicate union rules to you and exhibitors. We work with unions every day, and the level of trust built over time implies parties participate in a relationship of gives and gets, knowing nothing could be accomplished without the work and contribution of the other.

A troubling trend we see that planners also must understand is facilities bringing more services in-house that were once open to the market. Exclusive cleaning and rigging services reduce choice, which, as you'll remember from college Economics 101, effectively drives up costs.

Exclusive rigging in facilities often involves a four-hour minimum up and down -- compared to one-hour minimums elsewhere – a cost your exhibitors have not budgeted if they have a simple overhead sign. Communication is always paramount. The more planners know about unions, their fees and how that will impact budgets, the happier everyone will be. •

by Randy Pekowski,  
Vice President and COO, The Expo Group



**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](mailto:PCMAchatter@gmail.com)



## Message from the Board

*Stacy Knoppel*  
*Director of Sales and Marketing*  
*Baltimore Convention Center*



This month's issue of the Chatter offers suggestions and solutions, for both planners and suppliers, who are responsible for planning exhibits and working with unions. Both of these topics can be the focal point of many hours while preparing for a tradeshow, convention or meeting. I am lucky to have the opportunity to see the transformation of an exhibit hall from move-in to move-

out, daily. The production that goes into planning, move-in, the opening and move-out of the exhibits could not happen without a team of professionals collaborating throughout the process. Clear communication and understanding the expectations of the association and each department working on the team is key for producing a successful exhibition.

Union representation and union jurisdiction is different in every city and facility whether it's a hotel, a convention center or a conference center. Some union agreements are with the facilities and some are with the service contractors. In an effort to understand the needs of each individual facility, questions should be asked during the requests for proposal (RFP) stage or during the site visit regarding the union requirements. Spending time discussing the needs with each facility and the service contractor, at the early stages, will help create a positive outcome for your exhibitors as well as your association. In some cases there may be room to negotiate certain requests that are important to the exhibitors and the association.

Enjoy reading the following articles and I hope you will find helpful hints and tips that you can incorporate into your future planning processes and meet your association and organization's expectations. •



### Connect with the Capital Chapter!



Connecting with the Capital Chapter is not just about tracking what we are up to. We want to see what you are up to as well.



@PCMACC



PCMA Capital Chapter has become the first PCMA chapter to have an Instagram account because we believe in being creative and having fun with our communication. However, it is only as good as our members make it, so start shooting and posting today!



Follow us @pcmacapitalchapter and remember to tag us in your spring meeting photos as well by adding us into the comments or tag section. •



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## CEM is the new CMP! CEM Learning and Certification

“What is my next step?” or “What can I do to further my career?” These questions encourage professional growth and one of the ways that we can grow as professionals is to learn and obtain professional certifications. We are all mostly familiar with the CMP (Certified Meeting Professional), but in the spirit of this issue’s theme, we will focus on the CEM or “Certified in Exhibit Management” certification provided by the International Association of Exhibits & Events (IAEE). This program started in 1975 and “...was formed to raise professional standards...” according to the IAEE website.

The CEM “Learning Program” is based on twelve principles that cover all aspects of the industry from exhibit sales to floor plan development. Each of these twelve principles corresponds to an official course. In order to become certified, you must complete nine out of the twelve courses. If you already have your CMP, you can waive the “Conference and Meeting Management” course by submitting your CMP certification and a letter of request to IAEE prior to the completion of your 9th course. These courses are offered both online and on-location in over ten countries.

In order to apply for the program, you must have at least three years of industry career experience and submit the online application on IAEE’s website. Once you apply, you have a three year window to complete nine courses and complete each course exam. Each exam must be completed within 90 days of the end of the corresponding course. The initial application and course fees are listed below:

	Member	Non-Member
Application Fee**	\$100	\$125
Online Course	\$350	\$605
On-Location Course	\$250	\$385

\*\*Includes a copy of the Learning Program All Course Book, “The Art of the Show”.

Once you become a CEM, there is a three year recertification process where fifteen credits must be earned to continue in good standing. IAEE states that 85% of employers pay for the certification and that 50.5% of current CEMs work for a non-profit or trade association.

For more information, please visit [www.iaee.com/cem](http://www.iaee.com/cem) or email [cem@iaee.com](mailto:cem@iaee.com). •

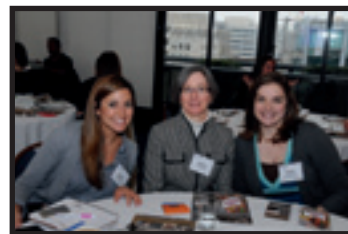
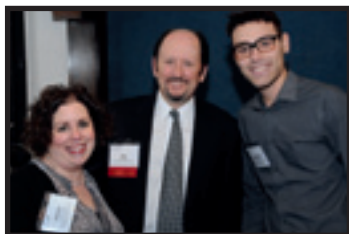
*by Samantha Moore, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)*

## Planner Workshop- Ripped From the Headlines: Trends Affecting Your 2015 Meetings

Industry periodicals and the internet are full of forecasts and lists of trends that the experts predict will affect the meetings industry. Businesses are constantly gathering data to see what meetings will look like in the future.

On Tuesday, March 4, an interactive workshop was held at the National Press Club sponsored by Visit Denver to help planners recognize and interpret trends. Peter Hanley and Joseph Friend from SourceyourMeeting.com facilitated the event. Everything from technology to contractual trends was highlighted. Planners were able to discuss what trends they are currently incorporating into their meetings and how those are working. When asked about her perception of the event, Diane Ramos, CMP, Director of Meetings & Conventions for National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors said, “It was a great value/cost friendly event (especially when I’m paying out of my own pocket). It was a great way to network with seasoned veterans as well as new and up and comers”.

Peter and Joseph, two industry leaders, challenged the planners to think outside the box and look at how their attendees are receiving information. When Peter asked, “Could you see broadcasting your General Session to the hotel rooms or possibly the gym?” it made us think of the possibilities. It is not only about recognizing trends, but inventing the trends that will set your meetings apart. •



*by Jean Riley, Senior Event Planner, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics*



## Labor Changes Improve Chicago and Philadelphia

Within the last few years, major labor changes have occurred in Philadelphia and Chicago. The Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau and Choose Chicago provided the background on these revisions and how it affects future customers.

### Philadelphia

Customer feedback led the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority (PCCA) to proactively establish a four-point plan of professionalizing management operations, improving the labor-supply model, modernizing work rules, and ensuring billing transparency.

In December 2013, the PCCA hired industry-leader SMG of West Conshohocken, PA, as the facility's manager. Within six months, the Center established new work rules and expanded exhibitor rights with the cooperation of four trade union partners including electricians, laborers, stagehands and riggers. Improvements established a core labor workforce and a welcoming show floor. The changes provided customers more independence and flexibility, allowing exhibitors to set up and tear down within their booths of 600 square feet or fewer, unload personally-owned vehicles using their own dollies, luggage carriers and two-to-four wheel hand trucks, use ladders of up to 6 feet tall, and work with approved power tools to hang graphics and signage. Even audio/visual equipment that is not rented can now be installed and removed.

"We have enhanced operations at the Center by importing SMG's best practices from around the country—and the world—to complement the team of professionals working here who know and understand your show," said General Manager Lorenz Hassenstein of SMG. "It's a new day in Philadelphia!"

### Chicago

Thanks to a recent agreement between McCormick Place, Navy Pier, MPEA, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Local 134, and International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), Local 2, Chicago is a more attractive destination for conventions and trade shows. This agreement allows IATSE stagehands to complete a type of work previously completed by IBEW electricians. IATSE members will now be allowed to install, operate, and remove the audio/visual, sound, and lighting equipment in certain areas used for presentations and performances, and to plug in the equipment to permanent outlets or temporary electrical services provided by electricians. Under the terms of the settlement, the following four key reforms were solidified:

- The Exhibitors' Bill of Rights
- Expanded Straight-time
- Personal Vehicles
- Crew Size Reductions

*by Ryan Barth, CMP  
Global Account Executive, ConferenceDirect*

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## Commit Today and Create a Lasting Impression on Tomorrow's Leaders

The PCMA Capital Chapter Mentoring Program is the perfect way to give back to the industry and connect with the next generation of meeting professionals. By volunteering to become a mentor, you agree to devote your expertise, passion and a manageable amount of time to your assigned "protégé". We also encourage any professional that is new to the industry, just graduated from college or are looking to learn more about the industry to also contact us to sign up as a protégé! It's a fantastic arrangement for both parties involved and it will not disappoint!

To sign up as a mentor or protégé or to ask a question, please contact Samantha Moore at [mentorship@generationmeet.com](mailto:mentorship@generationmeet.com) or by calling 301-514-1218.

## The ABC's of Unions

To write this article I had to start with the ABC's as I've had little experience with unions. There was the time when I was "obliged" to pay someone to assemble my pop-up booth... imagine my eagerness to be helpful when he asked how to do it; however, with the sophistication of tradeshow and companies having their tradeshow peeps design the booth experience, direct union contact was taken off my hands.



Unions were established early in America's history to fight for fair wages and working conditions for employees and to ensure that people hiring the workers are receiving highly skilled laborers. The AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) is the umbrella under which fifty-six of our national and international unions operate. These fifty-six "specialty" unions work for teachers, firefighters, etc. "Unite Here" is the primary hotel and food and beverage operations "specialty" union. Convention Center Official Service Contractors work with different unions in different cities – could be carpenters, sign, scene/pictorial painters, stage hands, teamsters, electricians, etc. An official services provider like GES or Freeman could be signatory to over 100 union agreements nationwide.

According to Ellen Schwartz, VP Sales at the Los Angeles Convention Center, official service contractors (the companies that provide the labor and equipment for exhibitors, material handling, registration set-ups, signs/banners, etc.), electrical contractors and the other contractors engaged by show management rely on union labor to provide the services needed. Rules, jurisdictions, terminology (riggers=decorators in SoCal or riggers=machinery movers in Chicago) and agreements vary from city to city, causing confusion and labeling a city as favorable or unfavorable to exhibitors (i.e. making it easy for companies to set their own pop-up booths). Specific rules and terminology should be requested from your official service contractor. Additionally, knowing how deep a city's pool is of skilled labor to work on the more elaborate tradeshow is important.

For centuries, unions have been a part of our country to ensure their members are happy and well trained so that they, in turn, deliver exceptional service to those of us on the receiving end. My guess is that our industry would look significantly different without them! •

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*by Marilyn Atchue-Zuill, HPN Global*

## North American Meetings Industry Day

Spearheaded by the Meetings Mean Business Coalition in collaboration with the Convention Industry Council, a nationwide day – North American Meetings Industry Day (NAMID) – has been created on April 16 to celebrate and advocate the economic impact of meetings, conventions, incentive travel, trade shows and exhibitions. In response, the PCMA Capital Chapter Government Relations and Advocacy Task Force and the Emerging Professionals Committee have organized a NAMID education event and rally at the Omni Shoreham. Meetings play a critical role in connecting people and driving positive business results. Often, the meeting industry's impact goes unnoticed. To emphasize this value, our Chapter's NAMID event will emphasize this value through the following themes:

**Meetings Create Personal Connections** – Personal relationships are at the core of every business decision and face-to-face meetings provide professionals with that personal interaction, which leads to deeper relationships.

**Meetings Drive Positive Business Outcomes** – Meetings and events deliver profits, help win new accounts, serve as education platforms and allow colleagues and partners to come together to innovate and achieve results.

**Meetings Build Strong Communities** – Outside of the results driven by business meetings, the meetings industry creates hundreds of thousands of jobs, generates billions of dollars of revenue and supports communities across North America.

NAMID will be kicked off with a general session on how to embrace and advocate the "Meetings Mean Business" message. Following the general session will be a series of roundtable concurrent sessions on grassroots impact, the value of meetings, business impact of meetings and local and federal government regulations. Finally, the day will be capped off with a rally and reception featuring the movers and shakers in our industry and community. Help us advocate for our industry and join your peers at NAMID on April 16. Thank you to our event sponsor, the Omni Shoreham Hotel. •

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*by Marcus Eng, CMP, American Public Transportation Association*

# Exhibit Design

We asked 10 designers and exhibit-industry experts to share their insights about effective trade show exhibit design.



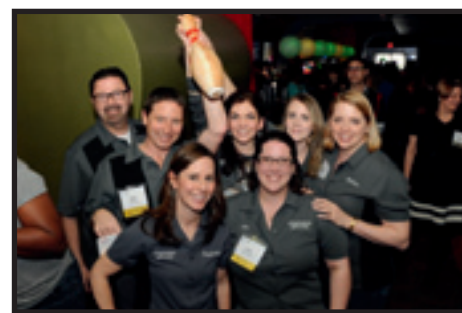


## PCMA Mix-N-Bowl

The PCMA Capital Chapter Mix-N-Bowl offered 32 teams the opportunity to let the good times roll at Bowlmor Lanes in Bethesda. Everyone had a great time knocking down pins, winning raffle prizes and networking. And at the end of the day we all learned that Charlotte's Got A Lot...of Prizes. Team Charlotte CVB earned the team high score and then their own Joe Smith of the Westin Charlotte became the event's kingpin with the highest score overall.

Thank you to the event's sponsor

**Charlotte's  
got a lot.**





## Adding a Wellness Theatre to the Exhibit Floor

Integrating a wellness area into conferences and trade shows is a current and novel concept for the meetings and exhibition industry. Wellness studios or zones offer a place for attendees to learn about personal, conference, workplace and travel wellness and work-life balance, pick up wellness information, and participate in fitness breaks. A wellness place also offers a mental and physical respite from the noise and crowds of the trade show environment.

The wellness concept was pilot tested as a Conference Wellness Knowledge Pod within the open area learning lab at PCMA Education Conference. The small space included chairs and small roundtables. There were no microphones as there was little space between the different learning labs. The Wellness Pod evolved into a Wellness Theatre at PCMA Convening Leaders Learning Lounge where there was a stage, seating area, 2 TV monitors with speakers, wellness agenda signage, and a table to display wellness resources. Given the open space concept and ambient noise, it was sometimes challenging to hear the speaker and attendee questions.



Things to Consider for Setting Up a Wellness Theatre:

- Location: integrate into the open exhibit hall or create a separate “zone”
- Seating: chairs, cube stools or couches? Ensure that chairs are not packed too tightly together, enabling participants to exercise at their seats.
- Tables: roundtables for group learning activities
- Sound: distribute speakers around the wellness theatre allowing the volume to be lower than if there was one set of speakers in front. The lower volume is less disturbing to neighbors.
- Microphone: audience microphone for attendees to ask questions
- Paneling: dividers provide a noise barrier
- Flooring: carpet with double padding or other textures (grass, sand, turf) for décor, foot comfort, and noise reduction.
- Décor: bamboo, drapery, flameless candles, aromatherapy, waterfalls and lighting create ambience and a zen-like environment
- Leader-driven and self-conducted activity: include a combination of interactive live fitness/wellness talks and videos shown on a continuous loop for participants to follow along on their own time
- Healthy snacks: superfood snack and beverage bar
- Beauty bar: indulge attendees with a make-up, hair, nail bar
- Quiet zone: mindfulness, meditation, massage (body and foot)



There are pros and cons to every wellness theatre set-up. Decorators who are solution-oriented will work within a budget to create the right look and feel for your event's wellness place and space. •

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*by Dr. Kim, President & Chief Exercise Officer, Exercise Bytes, Inc.*



## Member Spotlights

### Spotlight on a Planner

*Jessica Pinkston, CMP  
Event Manager  
Greenbuild Conference & Events  
U.S. Green Building Council*



Jessica has been in the hospitality industry for over 10 years. She started out working at Ritz-Carlton during college and realized she was more fascinated by the planning of events. Since then, she has been working at the U.S. Green Building Council where she started out as an intern. Jessica loved everything about the organization and has been with USGBC for seven years.

Jessica's background on stage has provided a direct connection with working in the events business. "I love that there is an actual visible end result to what I do. I spent some time growing up in theatre and I have a similar sensation being on stage as I do working an event onsite. I'm able to see the fruits of my labor and I'm able to see people interact with my work. There's so much work and energy that goes into producing an event that it feels good to know that it wasn't all for naught", Pinkston says.

Jessica grew up in Reston, Virginia, went to college at Marymount University and enjoys spending time in the Mosaic District in Merrifield, Virginia as well as dining at her favorite restaurant, Coastal Flats, in Tysons Corner.

Be on the lookout for Jessica at the next PCMA event; she's been a member 3 years and hopes to join a committee soon. •

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*by Ryan Barth, CMP  
Global Account Executive, ConferenceDirect*

### Spotlight on a Supplier

*Kim Bercovitz, Ph.D.  
President & Chief Exercise Officer  
Exercise Bytes Inc.*



One of the first people who greeted me at the PCMA Mix 'n Bowl registration desk was Dr. Kim. She's the spunky, Canadian-born (from Toronto), wellness guru that introduced personal and conference wellness to the Convening Leaders Learning Lounge. And she's a pole walker. This past summer, I had the opportunity to join her on a pole walk & talk through DC.

Besides her two children (ages 13 and 15), dog, and new husband, health, fitness and education have been her driving forces. It was Kim's parents health challenges requiring lifestyle changes that have inspired her. So how did this bring her to the hospitality industry? It was simply by accident. While delivering a bone health presentation at a Business of Aging Summit, she had the audience stand up and perform squats, heel and leg raises, and noticed an energy shift in the room. People were smiling and laughing. A lightbulb went on and the business idea of video fitness breaks was born!

An academic/researcher, Dr. Kim is an avid dancer (salsa, west coast swing) and is pursuing her new goal, long distance cycling. New to DC, she'd love to meet people who share her fitness passion! •

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*by Annette Suriani, CMP  
AMS Meetings Solutions*





## News Bytes

Email your news: [PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com](mailto:PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com)

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**ANNA GEBERT** IS NOW ACCOUNT DIRECTOR, MAJOR CONVENTIONS AT TOURISM TORONTO

**KAREN STAPLES** IS NOW MANAGING DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AT TALLEY MANAGEMENT GROUP, INC.



## Mark Your Calendar

**CAPITAL CONNECTION** Please join us for these upcoming events. Visit our chapter website for details and to register: [www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital](http://www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital)

**4/16 North America Meetings Industry Day (NAMID)**  
Education Program: 2:30pm – 4:30pm  
Rally & Reception: 4:30pm -5:30pm

**5/27 Quest for Talent**  
Education Program: 3:00pm - 5:00pm ET  
Networking Reception: 5:00pm - 7:00 pm ET  
Marriott Washington Wardman Park

**7/30 Capital Chapter Reboot 2015**  
Education Program: 1:00pm – 5:00pm  
Reception: 5:00pm – 7:00pm  
Walter E. Washington Convention Center & The Carnegie Library

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