## the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter

## **PCMA's Experiment in Conference Format**

At the 21014 PCMA Education Conference held June 22-25 in Toronto, we took a risk in changing up our tried and true conference format. In previous years, our mid-year conference of nearly 600 attendees, followed a fairly traditional model of two solid days of general sessions, followed by four breakouts in separate rooms on various topics. It was time to shake things up a bit. Not just for the sake of "doing something different" but in the spirit of disruptive innovation and to see what happens in real time when attendees experience a new conference design.

So what did we do? After the first day of traditional design—general session, breakouts, networking luncheon, more breakouts, we followed with a learning design of open space on

day two. Instead of breaking the conference different rooms we extended a large portion of the content from Monday's sessions into hands-on deeper dive application, with everyone learning and interacting in one large space. We created ranging various areas from posting and reading conference challenges to one on one appointments with fellow attendees, to rollup-your-sleeves personal plan development and idea

The entire second day of the Education Conference was a departure for the attendees and at on the on-set, many weren't sure how it would go.

Overall, our feedback is telling us that attendees enjoyed the freedom to create their own experiences in the open space. We relied heavily on the use of our conference mobile app to schedule and engage in the experience and we learned that communication to attendees about the process is key. But the most important thing I believe we learned in the open space environment was that of sound. A few of the learning areas were larger—around 60 people—and we did not utilize individual sound systems in the spaces due to their close proximity to each other and the sound "bleed through" that can occur from

one area to another. This made it difficult for attendees to hear the presenters and conversations times. This was an extremely important lesson to learn in of terms and acoustics in a room, how close is "too close" and the environments used to create effective learning.



exchanges. Overall, we created nine different environments ranging from typical rounds or high-boys to soft furniture. The technology we used ranged from standard white boards and flip charts to high-tech electronic smart white boards that were used to capture on-site conversations.

As usual, we're not sure what we'll do at the 2015 version of the Education Conference, but I do know that we'll continue to take risks on-site on behalf of our members so that they can see them in action. We'll all continue to learn together. •

— by Kelly Peacy, CAE, CMP, Senior Vice President, Education & Events Professional Convention Management Association

### The PCMA Capital Chapter is where "You Belong"!

**Mission**: The Capital Chapter of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) delivers breakthrough education, encourages involvement in community-based service programs, and promotes the value of professional convention and meeting management at the local level.

#### President

Annette Suriani, CMP **AMS Meetings Solutions** 703 261 6562 annette@amsmeetingssolutions.com

#### President-Elect

Mary Gallagher, CMP San Francisco Travel 202.803.5462 mgallagher@sanfrancisco.travel

Kathleen McAdams, CASE Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board 703.645.0035 kmcadams@lainc.us

#### Secretary

Joy Womack, CMP Experient 703.239.7504 Joy.womack@experient-inc.com

#### Immediate Past President

Kirsten Olean, CMP, CAE Association of American Medical Colleges 202.828.0479 kolean@aamc.org

Directors Kim Allison, CAE, CASE, CTA, Visit Baltimore 571.970.6041; kallison@baltimore.org Kristen Roget, CMP, Experient 703.239.7484; kristen.roget@experient-inc.com

Liz Dane, Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater

202.223.1599; Liz@visitspc.com

Marcus Eng, CMP, American Public Transportation Association 202.496.4874; meng@apta.com

Andy Falter, Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort

203.797.9559; afalter@swandolphin.com

Diane Kovats, CMP, International Society for Computational Biology 301.634.7920; dkovats@aai.org

#### Committee Chairs

Communications

Gail Seawright, CHSE, Loews Ventana Canyon Shannon Burke, CMP, National Association for College Admission

Counseling

Community Services Regina Rink, CASE, Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau Beverly Johnson-Hampton, CMP, American Chemical Society

**Emerging Professionals** 

Mindy Halpert, Consortium for School Networking Sheryl Brannon, CMP, MBA, Strategic Partnerships International, LLC

Marketing John Rubsamen, Americans for the Arts

James Gildea, Omni Hotels & Resorts

Membership

Geralyn Krist, CMP, Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association Melissa Tighe, Starwood Hotels & Resorts

Professional Development

Lisa French, Hilton Baltimore

Jean Riley, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Sponsorship

Leah Jones, CMP, Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association Rebecca Ramsey, Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau Government Affairs

Tamela Blalock, MTA, CMP, National Association of Wholesale Distributors

Terence Donnelly, CMP, Experient

## Chapter Liaison to PCMA National Board of Directors

Greg O'Dell, Events DC

Capital Chapter: pcmainfo@ascent-management.com

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



## Message from the Board

Kirsten Olean, CMP, CAE, Director of Meetings, AAMC Immediate Past President, Capital Chapter



Meetings have evolved quite a bit since I became a member of PCMA in 1998, and it is a constantly changing industry. It hasn't always changed the way we expected – remember when everyone was afraid that online meetings would replace face-to-face meetings? Now the two mediums live harmoniously side-by-side, each adding value to the learner experience.

For meeting planners, it is no longer just about logistics - it is about the total meeting experience. If we continue to do the same old thing - put talking heads at a head table in front of an audience seated in rows and rows of chairs - our meetings will become obsolete. Taking into account the characteristics and learning preferences of our audience, we have to design meetings that challenge, engage, and connect people. We have to question the norm, and challenge ourselves to think differently about our attendees' experience.

As meetings evolve, supplier partners will be challenged to evolve their facilities, products and services to address changing needs (without breaking the meeting planner's bank). What technologies can encourage and enhance interactivity in sessions? What if a hotel offered soft seating as a standard set in addition to traditional tables and chairs? How can F&B creatively support the objectives of a meeting? The facilities and vendors that get out in front on this will have the advantage in the marketplace. Our involvement in PCMA enables us to be an active part of the evolution of meetings. We come together to learn new strategies, share best practices, collaborate, innovate and make an impact on the industry. PCMA is the place for cutting-edge education and the best environment for creating effective partnerships with our industry colleagues. Together, we are creating an exciting future.

Join us soon at a Capital Chapter program, and be a part of the evolution! •



## 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.



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

## The New Approach to Panel Sessions

At the 2014 PCMA Education Conference in Toronto, PCMA redefined your standard panel. We ditched the traditional format to create a more engaging and digestible learning environment.

PCMA set up four stages throughout the session room where experts on Technology, Food & Beverage, Travel & Hospitality, Globalization and Exhibits & Tradeshows presented for five minutes, with five minutes for questions afterwards. This format gave attendees takeaways on a variety of topics they wouldn't normally have access to with longer sessions.

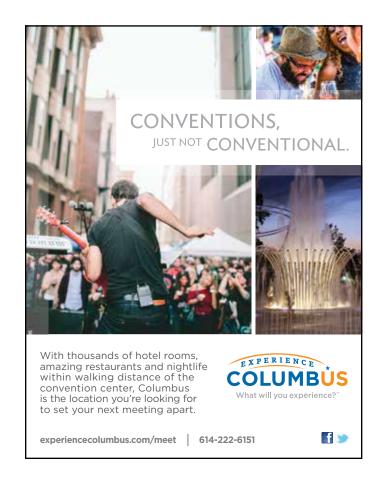
I was tasked to share insights on Globalization, as it is what I live and breathe every day at PCMAHQ. Here's what to look forward to in the next 18-24 months on the Globalization front:

- New/emerging destinations with high government control are looking to grow their economy by diversifying revenue sources.
- Meetings industry relation: Many governments are focused on meetings/leisure as one pillar for growth. Organizations should identify potential partners in these markets and analyze the reality of in-market presence opportunities.
- Two-thirds of travel jobs will move to Asia by 2025.
- Meetings industry relation: Societies need to think about what this means for them NOW and evaluate the potential for growth, engagement and communication in or with the region.
- Urban knowledge hubs: Emerging markets are becoming hotbeds of innovation, especially in efforts to reach the growing middle class and low-income consumers around the globe.
- Meetings industry relation: Where is your organization's industry rapidly developing and where will the new R&D hubs be for the related fields?
- Mobility of talent and knowledge: Individuals are no longer only competing with local peers for jobs.
- Meetings industry relation: There is access to talent 24-7 all over the globe. This provides varying team perspectives, diversity and greater opportunity for innovation, new ideas, and "different thinkers." This can also cause concern for communication efficiency and cultural understanding.



Do you agree with these trends? Do you see something different taking place? Email me at mcrowley@pcma.org.•

-by Michelle Crowley, Director of Global Development, PCMA



## PCMA Capital Chapter Scores Success with Half Day Education Event

The inaugural Capital Chapter Half-Day Education Meeting on July 21, 2014 offered an opportunity for over 120 attendees to learn about the challenges we face daily and the tools to make our industry better today and for the future. We kicked off the afternoon with opening session speaker Erik Hansen, Senior Director of Domestic Public Policy at US Travel Association. He rallied our industry to come together as "One Industry One Voice" through "Meetings Mean Business" showing the real economic impact of what conferences and conventions contribute to our country.

The educational sessions provided attendees with the tools needed to move our meetings forward in today's ever-changing marketplace. Dave Lutz, of Velvet Chainsaw Consulting taught us how to make the case for tech-enabled conferences and the "Secrets for Growing your Conference Sponsorship Revenue". Thadeus Weber and Russell Sanders from Production Resource Group took our emerging professionals from audio visual basics through producing a general session.

If you have ever thought about making a transition in your association career from the meetings and events department to executive leadership, then we hope you attended our breakout session "From Meetings to the C Suite". We heard from several industry leaders on how they developed the skill set to make this transition a reality. Session moderator Diane Kovats of International Society for Computational Biology led a distinguished panel of guests: Jack Chiasson, Chief Executive Officer of National Association of Independent Life Brokerage Agencies, Maureen Goodson, Executive Director with National Postal Forum, Jeremy Figoten, Senior VP of Meetings, Communications & Sales for National Apartment Association and Kimberly Lewis, Senior VP, Community Advancement, Conferences and Events, from U.S. Green Building Council.

If you couldn't make it to the July half-day event, we encourage you not to miss next the next educational event on October 22, 2014, as we continue to bring you the latest education and tools to assist you on your path to becoming an industry leader.

Our chapter is extremely grateful to our venue partner, Convene, located in Tyson's Corner, for providing a state-of-the-art meeting and conference facility as well as a sincere thanks to all our sponsors for making this event a huge success!

Platinum Sponsors: Experience Columbus; Convene

**General Session Speaker Sponsor:** Discover the Palm Beaches **Breakout Session Sponsor:** Kalahari Resorts & Conventions **PCMA Best in Class Speaker Sponsor:** Mexico Tourism Board

by Jennifer Bumbalo, Reno Tahoe USA













**Evolve 101 – What's Happening in Shipping?** 

Planners are bombarded with options to get critically important shipments from point A to point B, and everyone is under the gun to keep budgets in check and get everything where it needs to be on time and intact. When it comes to shipping, how does one go about making the right choice? Service, expertise and price all come into play. And sometimes, a company chosen to handle domestic shipping is not the best choice for international services. Make your choice wisely.

When I think about my evolution in the last 14 years, it's all about customer service and keeping relationships strong, even in the face of adversity. Planners rely on trusted partners to make the right choices, but do those we task internally with implementation have enough information to make the right choices?

Case in point, recently one of our customers was organizing a meeting overseas. The main planner tasked her assistant with deciding who would ship a critical meeting component overseas. The less seasoned assistant chose a vendor with whom they had no track record, but who was offering a very low price. Lo and behold the shipment arrived at the port of destination with huge customs issues. It was in serious jeopardy of not making it in time for registration to open. What does one do in this situation? If faced with a situation like this, hopefully you know someone to call upon for help. Having a freight partner who's on top of industry changes is so important.



At first glimpse, the changes in convention shipping seem mostly related to security post-9/11, but further insights find changes afoot everywhere. Currently, the lines are blurred as to who does what. Contractors are now offering freight packages to planners. FedEx is even offering ground services. Another marketplace issue influencing shipping is fuel prices. They drive up the cost of doing business for all freight providers, and those surcharges are passed along to the shipper.

Shipping will continue to evolve. Remember that the lowest price is not necessarily the lowest price. Always select the vendor that is right for YOU. •

– by John Floyd, Founder Association Freight Services LLC

## 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. To showcase the program, we asked protégé Femke Morelisse, newly hired management trainee at Global Experience Specialists (GES), about her experience in the program and her relationship with mentor Karin Soyster Fitzgerald, CMP, CAE, Chief Operations Officer / Deputy Executive Director at International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).

"Participating in the PCMA Capital Chapter Mentorship Program allowed me to create an impactful relationship with an established industry professional. Having a mentor gave me the responsibility and resources to ask important questions and seek guidance for where I wanted to begin my career out of college. I found the program extremely beneficial to both my personal and professional development as a PCMA Student Member while at James Madison University", said Femke Morelisse. She also said that Karin Fitzgerald was a valuable resource when she was applying and interviewing for her current position at GES.

This is just one example of the many success stories of the mentoring program and we encourage our membership to sign up! 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 samanthamoore5119@gmail.com or by calling 301-514-1218. •

# Making it Personal: Engaging Attendees with Meeting Technology

How do you engage with your attendees? Should you email? Text? IM? Direct message? Instagram? In this age of information overload, meeting planners have seen a major shift in how participants want to engage – and savvy planners are using new tools to reach them.

Event marketing strategy has changed substantially in the last three years. It used to be enough to publish a conference agenda online and maybe send a postcard or two. Now that we are bombarded with information every hour of every day, marketers have to work harder to catch potential attendees' attention. Segmenting your target audience and tailoring specifically will cut through the clutter and demonstrate that your meeting offers something specifically for them.

Social media platforms such as Twitter remain a valuable tool, as long as planners understand that they are not a reliable way to reach everyone. Depending on your demographic, Twitter may be more or less reliable for your audience. In my experience, mass text messaging and mobile app alerts reach all attendees quickly. Mobile apps have become so commonplace at most conferences that it's becoming rare not to have one!

After a long adoption period, mobile gaming is also finally starting to gain traction at events. Some mobile apps have gaming plugins, and both FourSquare and SCVNGR are fun ways to create a competitive atmosphere among your attendees. Geofencing – which creates a GPS-based virtual perimeter around a space – is a new technology that we will begin seeing more of on show floors. When attendees enter the virtual fence, the geofencing software can send them a push message with a special note or offer. If you haven't seen this at the mall yet, you will soon!

When it comes to meeting technology, change is the new norm. Just keep an open mind and have fun! •

——— by Janeé Pelletier, MBA, CMP Conference & Logistics Consultants

#### EMERGING PROFESSIONALS

## Five Things I Wish I Would Have Known as an Emerging Professional

"If I only knew then what I know now" is an expression I find myself saying as I advance through my career. If I could do it all over again, these are the things I would have focused on more:

- **5.** Learn a little about a lot: Find your passion by learning about different aspects of the industry. Maybe you see yourself working on special events or maybe you want to try working for a hotel. Ask to shadow people who currently have these jobs, volunteer, and/or find internships to figure out what part of this industry you enjoy most while also learning different skills to help you grow.
- **4. Scholarships:** There are endless scholarship opportunities available to planners. Want to attend a conference? Find a scholarship. Need financial assistance for school? Find a scholarship. Want to attend a local chapter event? Find a scholarship. There is no harm in applying. In fact, you may be the ONLY one who applies!
- **3. You Have Value!:** When starting out, it's often difficult to fathom how you could have an impact. You come in with a fresh set of eyes, new ideas, and questions on why things are done the way they are. Share your ideas! They might not always come to fruition, but when they do, it's a sweet victory.
- **2.** The Value of Networking: I spent many years missing out on connecting with my peers. Networking could lead to your next job, help you find the next best place to host your event, or it could introduce you to others who have the same passions as yourself. It's nice to have someone understand why something like signage could excite you. #nerdalert.
- **1. Find a Mentor:** Finding a mentor was single handedly the best decision I ever made. My only regret is not finding one earlier. My current mentor became my boss, helped guide me through the CMP process, pushes me to continue to learn and stay on top of industry trends, and has become a true friend! •

by Sarah Mahmoud, CMP, MTA, Meetings Manager Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (APIC)

# The Evolution of Marketing for Meetings

Over the past several years, event marketers have had to wake up to the unfortunate reality that mass marketing is dead. Unfortunate because mass marketing generally takes less time and resources to execute. The approach ignores market segment differences and attempts to go after the entire audience with one message that will reach and appeal to the largest number of people possible.

Today's new reality, however, is based on the knowledge that meeting audiences are diverse therefore we can't create a single message that appeals to all the groups within it. We must use targeted marketing strategies and campaigns aimed at very specific geographic, demographic, psychographic and/ or behavioral segments of our database. The fortunate news is that developments in technology are allowing marketers to target their prospects and participants more precisely.

One such development is behavioral triggered email campaigns. When a prospect interacts with an email, i.e. opens a message, clicks on a certain link, etc., the next message the prospect receives will be based upon the last interaction, creating a more meaningful connection with the recipient. A behavioral e-mail trigger campaign is a powerful technique to automatically follow-up prospect actions to help increase conversion at a low cost.

Similarly, retargeting is allowing savvy digital marketers to boost ROI on the marketing tactics they are already using to drive visitors to their website. Effectively using retargeting keeps a meeting top-of-mind and allows marketers to serve segmented, laser-targeted and relevant ads, and expand reach through lookalike models based on behavioral profiles.

These are only two examples of the technologies that allow meeting marketers to cost-effectively identify, serve and communicate with very narrow segments of an audience on the basis of interests, preferences and past behaviors. There are also many lower-tech ways of delivering targeted messaging – dynamic content emails, variable data printing, customized web landing pages, even telemarketing. Whether traditional or new media channels are being used, marketers must ensure they are executing in a way that is as targeted and relevant as possible to the audience's diverse needs. •

- by Kimberly Hardcastle-Geddes, CEM, Owner & President , mdg

Christian Piencka Account Executive & Marketing Analytics Manager, mdo





## **CMP Healthcare Designation**

The passing of the Sunshine Act, which is part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, has had a huge effect on the continuing medical education (CME) meetings industry. The Act regulates where these meetings take place, how much money can be spent, whose attendance must be reported and more. According to the Accreditation Council of Continuing Medical Education's (ACCME) 2011 Annual Report, more than 133,000 CME events were held in the United States in 2011 (the most recent statistics available). These meetings were hosted by a variety of organizations in various sectors of this industry including hospital and health care, insurance/managed-care, physician member organizations, associations and more. Meeting professionals who plan these activities must understand and abide by the Sunshine Act to ensure their organizations stay out of litigation and avoid hefty fines.

And that's just in the US. In many parts of the world, governments have similar laws and regulations that must be followed when hosting a healthcare-related meeting (e.g., the Bertrand Act in France). Because of the special knowledge needed by meeting professionals working in the healthcare industry, the Convention Industry Council developed the Certified Meeting Professional – Healthcare (CMP-HC) subspecialty. The CMP-HC program was launched in May 2014 after two years in development. CIC recruited more than 100 CMPs from various sectors of the healthcare industry to develop this new program. This ensured that the program and its accompanying exam addressed all aspects of the industry.

These subject matter volunteers first developed the CMP-HC Standards, which is the body of knowledge needed to be a successful healthcare meeting professional. The CMP-HC Standards are comprised of three domains – Planning, Implementation and Evaluation Audit. Under each of these domains are knowledge and skill statements that further identify the Standards. For instance, under the Evaluation/Audit Domain, the Standards outline such skills as "reporting healthcare provider expenses," "deviation reporting," and "transfer of value and transactions."

Those wishing to sit for the CMP-HC must already be CMP-certified. The CMP ensures that the professional already possesses the essential knowledge and skills needed to manage meetings. The CMP-HC does not repeat any knowledge covered in the CMP exam. Like the CMP, the CMP-HC ensures that those holding the designation have additional mastery of skills and knowledge as outlined on the CMP-HC's Standards.

For those contemplating this new subspecialty designation, please visit the Convention Industry's website for eligibility requirements and other program policies.

by Gayle G. Dahlman and Arcynta Ali Childs, Convention Industry Council

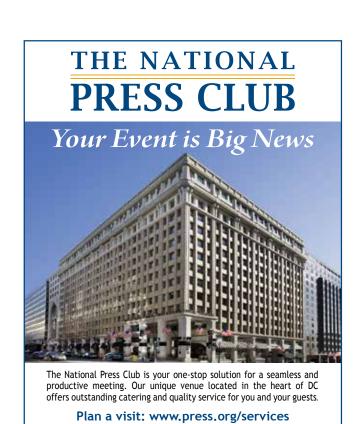
## PMPI CMP UNIVERSITY

PMPI will be holding its next CMP study course September –November 2014 and are willing to offer PCMA members a 15% discount off the non-member fees to participate.

Use Discount Code: PCMAFALLCMP on the payment page to get the 15% off.

http://www.cvent.com/d/d4qfz3

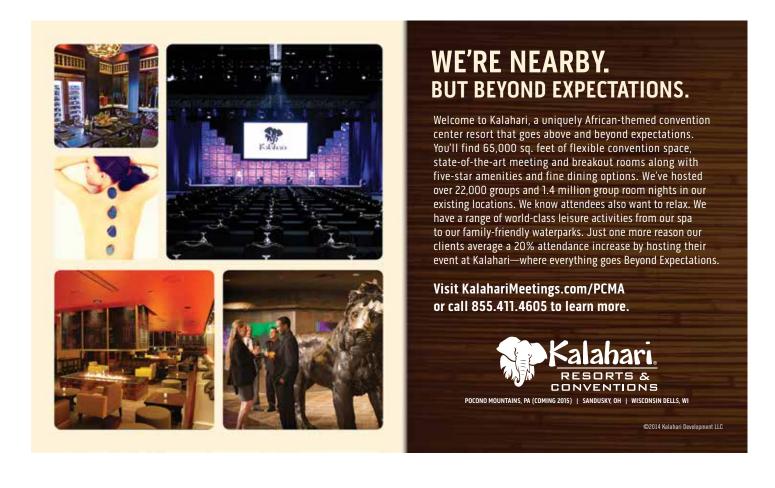
Take advantage of this "back to school" deal today!



sales@press.org

202-662-7541





#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## The Evolution of the CMP Program

"Next year, the Convention Industry Council will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the CMP Program. The work of meeting professionals has changed considerably in that time and the CMP Program is constantly updated to reflect these changes. We are grateful to the hundreds of meeting professionals who have volunteered over these 30 years to ensure that our program identifies what is needed to be a successful meeting professional." -Karen Kotowski, Executive Director, Convention Industry Council

### A timeline of the CMP:

6/6/1985 The CMP is launched at the MPI Annual Meeting in Chicago; Twenty-three candidates are certified.

12/1993 The first international exam is held in Rome.

1995 The first CMP Conclave is held at Atlanta's Chateau Elan Resort in Atlanta; CMP Program hits 2,500.

2003 The first Pan-Asian CMP Exam is conducted in Singapore. 2004 The first Pan-European CMP exam offered in Frankfurt.

2005 CMP Conclave in Toronto where the CIC International Manual is released. CIC releases the 8th Edition of the Convention Industry Council Manual. 2008

The first Global CMP Exam Day with testing locations in Italy, Singapore, South Korea and Cancun. 2/20/2010

2011 CMP Blueprint, the body of knowledge on which the exam is based, is updated and renamed

"CMP International Standards" or CMP-IS. The updated CMP-IS included concepts such as sustainability, which

was an emerging issue.

The CMP moves from paper to computer-based testing. The exam is now administered four times a year in 10-day 2012

testing windows. In addition, candidates get immediate, preliminary results, rather than waiting 4-6 weeks.

2013 CIC develops and beta tests the healthcare subspecialty certification – the CMP-HC. The exam is officially

launched in May 2014.

2014 CIC released the 9th Education of the Convention Industry Council Manual. The new edition is reformatted to

follow the 10 domains in the CMP-IS and also incorporates the CIC International Manual. For the first time, the

manual is available in e-book format.

As of July 16, 2014, there are a total of 10,379 CMPs in 54 countries! • *Note: Information provided by the Convention Industry Council (CIC)* 



## **Member Spotlights**

## Spotlight on a Planner

Ushma Suvarnakar

Meetings Manager, American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists



Ushma Suvarnakar grew up in DuBois, PA, attended the University of Pittsburgh and is loyal to the Steeler Nation! Ushma joined PCMA for not only the networking opportunities but also to share ideas with other meeting professionals about best practices. "I truly appreciate the camaraderie between planners and all the support that I have received in my 4 years as a member." Ushma enjoys seeing an event from the inception and strategy stages to fruition. "It's a huge sense of personal accomplishment to see the final end product."

Ushma was awarded the 2013 PCMA Achievement Award as an Emerging Leader and more recently, accepted as one of the 12 senior executives invited into the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) 2014-

2016 Class: Diversity Executive Leadership Program (DELP). Currently Ushma is working towards attaining her CMP and CAE designations.

She attributes her successes to how she was raised. Ushma's mother, who introduced her to the industry, is her inspiration and her father remains supportive and encouraging of all her endeavors. She loves spending time with her family and traveling with them to places such as Greece and Turkey.

Ushma's advice to others who are looking to work in the industry: "Networking is critical to this industry; it's so important to maintain solid relationships with everyone you encounter because you never know where you might see them again." •

by Tanya Barrett, CMP, CEM, Manager, Meeting Services

## Spotlight on a Supplier

Rene McCoy, Director of Group Sales
The Westin Alexandria



Originally from Brooklyn, Rene has lived in the Metro area for over 20 years and has been in the hospitality industry for 17. Rene's journey began when she attended Livingstone College in North Carolina where she married into the military and began her travels. Although Rene has lived in several countries, Japan is where she would move back to in a heartbeat.

Rene spends much of her free time at the movies. The Color Purple is her all-time favorite. When not at the local cinema, Rene is cooking her famous shrimp casserole and enjoying a glass of wine. A sommelier in the making, she enjoys affordable wines like a Mark West Pinot Noir, the high-end Opus One, and

everything in between.

With Starwood since 2001, Rene left briefly to open the Gaylord National, but soon returned. "For me, this is home," Rene says of her Starwood family. Rene speaks highly of PCMA and the Emerging Professionals Committee. Joining in 2008 at the behest of good friend, Jamal Hageb, PCMA has expanded her professional AND personal networks. Rene can be found every year at the PCMA Annual Meeting. When you see her there, make sure to ask for a recommendation on a good wine. •

-by Kristin Hanley, Public Affairs Council

TOM ALBRECHT is now the Senior National Sales Manager for the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau and SHEILA NEAL, CASE will now handle the Diversity Professional market for Detroit.

FAYE MEMOLI is now Senior National Sales Executive for Visit Orlando.

**SAMANTHA "SAM" MOORE** is now Meetings Coordinator for the American Association of Immunologists (AAI).

KAREN BATMAN has joined the ConferenceDirect team as Vice President after 29 years with the Hilton San Francisco Union Square. Congratulations Karen!

KELLY BLECKE is now Senior Sales Manager, Mid-Atlantic Corporate & Association Markets for the Hilton Anatole



CAPITAL CONNECTION

## Mark Your Calendar

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

#### 9/23 Save the Date! Oktoberfest

Joint PCMA/PMPI Networking Event Penn Social, Washington, DC

#### Save the Date! 9/30 **Fall Planner Workshop**

3:30 PN - 5:30 PM Reception Set to Follow. Wardman Park Marriott 5:50pm: Reception to follow immediately

afterwards for planners and suppliers

#### 10/22 Save the Date!

Fall Education Event-Kaiser Permanenta **Center for Total Health** 

3:30 PM - 5:30 PM Reception Set to Follow. Wardman Park Marriott 5:50pm: Reception to follow immediately afterwards for planners and suppliers

#### 12/18 PCMA Capital Chapter Capital Classroom 3:00 PM- 5:00 PM

Hotel Monaco 480 King Street Sponsored by Kimpton Hotels & Resorts and the Fort Woth Convention and Visitors Bureau

## WE SALUTE OUR SPONSORS!

## Platinum Sponsors















HOTELS & RESORTS















## **Gold Sponsors**









## Silver Sponsor





## **Bronze Sponsors**























PRESORTED FIRST CLASS MAIL U.S. POSTAGE PAID RICHMOND, VA PERMIT #320

## **Capital Chapter of PCMA** 3337 Duke Street Alexandria, VA 22314-5219

#### Chatter Info...

The Chatter is published by the **PCMA Capital Chapter** Attn: Rachael Guarnieri

3337 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-5219 Phone: 703.370.7436 x401, Fax: 703.342.4311 Email: PCMAinfo@ascent-management.com

#### Issue Editors...

Kristen Hanley **Public Affairs Council** khanley@pac.org Marie Fredlake ConferenceDirect marie.fredlake@conferencedirect.com

#### **Production Editors..**

Shannon Burke, CMP National Assn. for College Admission Counseling sburke@nacacnet.org **Carly Bushong** 

The Gerontological Society of America cbushong@geron.org



the best technology in the industry



With two world-class venues, flexible space and setup options, and unparalleled capabilities...

Boston events leave a lasting impression. Arrange a site visit today. Call 877.393.3393 or visit SignatureBoston.com



