

the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter

CVBs and DMOs Love Small Meetings Too!

Yes, as a planner, you know how important and valuable a convention & visitors bureau (CVB) or destination marketing organization (DMO) can be to your citywide annual convention, but CVBs and DMOs also love your small meetings. Some destinations are tailored to smaller meetings since they don't have a convention center and other cities with large inventories are looking for those great opportunities to fill a need for their hotel members.

The bureau representative is your destination expert. They are going to review your meeting requirements and listen to what is most important. They can make sure that you are considering the right hotels in addition to independent hotels that you may not be aware of. CVBs and DMOs do remain impartial, but they still can help you think through a process by reminding you what each property brings to the table.

Bureau reps can customize how they work with you. Do you want to collect the proposals? Do you want the bureau rep to collect the information? Do you want to work through your hotel global sales team? They can only serve you better if they are aware of the search and needs. On the ground in the destination, the bureau rep is invaluable. They can organize your site inspections and serve as your tour guide the entire time. Their intimate knowledge of the destination can give you greater insight and even synergies to make it the ideal location for the meeting.

Once you select the destination, their expertise can still come into play as they can provide references to all types of services, vendors, or venue needs. Depending on the destination, you may even have a service manager with the CVB and DMO that will continue working with you once booked. This means collateral like visitor guides or maps that can be used to build excitement or just help attendees get around the location. Remember that a DMO, like any organization, budgets for



these items, so if they are unaware that meeting is booked they might not have enough or may come at a cost.

In the end, it can be incredibly worthwhile to learn where to find your destination representative. Two great resources are the Destination Marketing Association International website (www.destinationmarketing.org), especially for smaller cities or even regions, and the CVB Reps website (www.cvbreps.com) which has local contact information for over 60 different destinations. •

*by Will Trokey, CMP,
National Sales Manager, Visit Charlotte.*



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

Andrew P Falter

President

Sponsorship Reliance Group



As a supplier in our industry, we all know that our goal is to book business. That's one of our top priorities. This can be done in many ways but when one has a great relationship with a client, this certainly helps with the process. One of the best ways to build relationships is to get involved with the Capital Chapter. When I'm speaking with a potential new member who wants to join the Capital Chapter, I always encourage them to join a committee and get involved. Becoming a member is great and you will meet many people at our events, but by joining a committee and getting involved, you will build incredibly strong relationships.

Relationships are the foundation for our success. People do business with who they like and once a "friend" relationship is established, it benefits both sides not only in the professional setting but also on the personal side. Many people in our industry have had the good fortune of building relationships and strong bonds with others that they can call friends for life. And while booking business is important to our professional success, making friends for life is something that you can hold on to forever!

This issue talks about the supplier side of our business and we hope you enjoy the articles contributed by members and guest authors that touch on subjects such as: CVBs love small meetings too, making the leap from sales to service, when to use a DMC, working with a third party and suppliers pet peeves which I'm sure everyone is interested in, LOL!

Happy Reading and thanks for your continued support of the Capital Chapter.... •



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.



@PCMACCC



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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From Sales to Service...

Keeping it “All in the Family”

Sales and Service relationships are very inter-twined, often having a family dynamic. And like all families, when it comes time for a wedding...or a contract commitment....everyone wants to minimize dysfunction!

What Sales Can Do

- **Introduce Services During Site Visit** – The servicing of any event is a huge part of a successful outcome. By setting aside some time during the site to introduce a service team member, you help set the expectation that a transition will be made and can begin outlining the process.
- **Share Information** – Share all information to expedite the relationship building with your clients. For example, client is most responsive to email, tends to respond after-hours or just got a new board chair that may be changing the program.
- **Check In Periodically** – Always circle back around with your services partner and client. If there are any gaps in communication, you'll be able to help catch those and offer a bridge. And if things are going great, it's good to know that, too!

What Services Can Do

- **Keep Sales Informed** – Has a planning visit been booked? Is a particular vendor being unresponsive? Sales folks often cross paths with clients at industry events and being aware of things going on with Convention Services shows we are a team.
- **Earn the Return** – Not only does the successful execution of an event make or break the chances of a repeat program for a hotel or destination, Services can help start this conversation prior to the group's departure and bring Sales back into the loop.

What Clients Can Do

- **Connect the Right Contacts** – If you won't be the contact for the Services team, help make the introduction of your logistics partner to your Sales contact so they can make the introduction to Services.
- **Provide Planning Site Visit Needs in RFP/Contract** – Knowing in advance how many rooms to plan for as well as your expectation for Services involvement is very helpful. Will you need a full-blown site tour of all facilities or do you prefer to just get help securing a few hotel rooms?

Just as it would be ideal for “spouses-to-be” to have already met family and friends before the engagement, the same holds true for the turnover process from Sales to Services. We all have variations of the same goal; to execute a flawless event for your attendees! •

by Kristen Parker, CASE
Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau

And Planner Makes 3: Working with a Third Party

I'm a convert! As a past hotel sales manager, I never appreciated the value of a third-party planner to a meeting planner. Now that I am one, I'm so impressed! That sounds arrogant, but I don't mean “with me”. It's a package plan that, given a strong third-party “partner”, can save a planner a great deal of time and money!



In the meetings world, we have both professional and volunteer planners; the latter's “real job” more than likely is not planning. I first thought that a volunteer planner would derive more value from third-parties; however, that's not the case. With the volume of meetings booked by third parties, using multiple chains and independents worldwide, they develop strong relationships from which they are able to deliver greater savings for everyone. And because many third parties come from the hotel side, their understanding of negotiable items that create win/win situations for everyone becomes invaluable.

Why third parties?

- The third-party planner is a consultant/partner, delivering service and value at no cost to the organization. They earn their keep from hotel commissions on guestrooms consumed. Their focus is on the big picture; understanding the dynamics of the organization to search for the best complete package.
- An RFP is sent to multiple venues in requested destinations, with responses coming back to the third party. I personally believe in sourcing the CVB's and National Sales Reps as they become invaluable team players in getting the job done.
- When the responses are complete, the planner receives an outline of the bids, from which the planner can narrow down their preferences. From their “shorter” list, the third-party works on further negotiating rates, concessions and contractual terms.
- When the planner has determined the best option(s), the third-party arranges site visits, meals, overnight stays, transportation, etc. to ensure that the planner's time is well spent.

Misconceptions are that planners forfeit control by using a third party, relinquishing job and relationships with suppliers; however, the opposite is true. The planner is in control all the way, selecting the property, signing the contract and working with venue staff before and during the event. The gift of time to focus on other important responsibilities during the search process is priceless, so find that third-party and let them be your partner! •

by Marilyn Atchue-Zuill
Global Account Director, HPN Global

It's a Bird... It's a Plane... No, It's a DMC!

When a DMC Can Be Your Superhero

Imagine that you are a seasoned meeting planner with 20+ years of experience. You have seen it all and there is no challenge you haven't tackled.

Now, close your eyes and picture this scenario:

Your president has decided that he would like to host a pop-up meeting in an unfamiliar city for 50 of your top executives. You have to create an engaging multi-day program, complete with unique offsite events and creative teambuilding. You are operating on a short staff and have about 50 other meetings to plan. Oh, and you have two months to execute it!



Your friendly neighborhood DMC to the rescue!

Meeting planners are often confronted with the decision of whether to enlist a Destination Management Company (DMC). DMCs are the experts in their destinations who offer planning and coordination services — either bundled or à la carte — for special events, décor, transportation, tour programs, teambuilding, housing, registration services and so much more to help meeting planners ensure their events are successful.

So, when is it most valuable to enlist the assistance of a DMC?

1. When it is a new destination for the meeting and the planner. DMCs are local experts and help planners navigate unfamiliar territory. They have established connections and relationships with local venues and top vendors. This helps with risk management and eliminates the unknown, because the DMC has already vetted all vendors, worked in most venues and they can offer tried and true solutions.
2. The program planning team is pressed for time or inexperienced, or it is short lead-time. The DMC is a true partner for the meeting planner and becomes an extension of his or her team. When a planner partners with a DMC, he or she gains access to their team, their experience, insider knowledge of all of the best venues, vendors, experiences, new local trends and local connections. It expands the capabilities of the planning team exponentially, and saves time in the process!
3. A planner needs to manage a program with multiple moving parts, such as offsite events, transportation, tour programs and staffing needs. If a planner only needs assistance with one aspect of a program, such as transportation, a DMC can also be a valuable solution to take that time consuming task off of the planner's plate.
4. When it is time to impress. Organizations invest a lot of time, energy and money into their meetings and events; the successes of their investments weigh heavily on the planners. A DMC is the ultimate resource for creative solutions for a complex event, a fresh vision for an annual meeting or something completely unique that will enhance the attendee experience or the ROI for the organization or sponsors.

5. When budgets need to be clear, concise and controlled. While DMCs do charge for their services, DMCs also offer tremendous cost-savings through saving the planner valuable time, and offering preferred vendor pricing through their relationships and buying power. On average, it can take a planner, at minimum, three times as long as a DMC for a seemingly simple task such as locating a venue or sourcing a caterer or transportation company. Without a DMC, there is the daunting element of the great unknown when it comes to the quality or suitability of the venue or vendor. DMC pricing proposals also eliminate variables for planners by providing clear figures for planning their budgets.

Ultimately, having a DMC at your side is like having 24/7 access to the Bat-Signal. They can pull off seemingly impossible tasks in impossibly short timeframes. DMCs have such strong relationships with local vendors that assist them in troubleshooting like champions. When planning a complex meeting in unfamiliar territory, wouldn't you want a superhero at your side? •

Kate Sullivan Nelson

District Experience, a Global DMC Partner

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Move From Relationships to Partnerships

As you might recall, the controversy surrounding author James Frey and his fabrications in his best-selling book *A Million Little Pieces* was fodder for talk shows and on-line chats several years ago. But what lesson can we, in the meetings industry, take from these discussions?



It showed me how important one's credibility and trustworthiness are in life. This is certainly true for personal relationships as well as business relationships. Since the most important component of any relationship is trust, maintaining one's credibility is paramount to establishing and maintaining long-term relationships of any kind.

Make A Promise, Keep A Promise...

In order to develop a strong foundation for a lasting business relationship, we must be honest and reliable, promising only that which we can deliver. We must work overtime to make it happen, and ultimately keep that pledge. Trust is earned on experiences from past behavior, on promises made and kept, and on "commitment to performance" from a person and a reliable organization. It is imperative that whatever we promise to do, we do. Equally important is saying what we can't do, to avoid any gaps between a client's expectations and reality. Those gaps could be the crevasses that eventually erode a relationship.

To move relationships to partnerships, in addition to trust, mutually beneficial business relationships also need to provide value for each party.

Working with someone you can trust, and with a company with an established reputation for excellence and honesty, often helps ensure the success of your meeting, incentive, convention or exposition. Ultimately, the longer you work with that person and/or company, the greater the value for both. The benefits are many, including greater efficiency because the trusted party often knows, or can even anticipate, many of your specific needs.

Trust + Value = A Partnership

As the relationship progresses, it often blossoms to become a true business partnership, built on performance and mutual concern.

It is apparent that every business today should welcome satisfying long-term business relationships. But wanting these relationships, and building successful ones, may not be easy. Relationships are built, and then they take time and ongoing effort. Evaluate the current relationships that you have with clients and suppliers, and identify ways you can improve these relationships. One way is to enhance the personal touch, since studies show that social bonds have a great affect on the perceived value of service. Taking that extra step can prove to be very beneficial, since long-term business relationships often lead to long-term success and joy in doing business. •

by David Gabri
CEO, Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI)

David Gabri is CEO of Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI), the leading independent Global Sales Organization serving the North American meetings and incentive marketplace for its membership of more than 170 Four- and Five-Diamond quality hotels and resorts worldwide, plus 9 luxury cruise ships, and 100 DMC service providers in over 65 countries. Contact your nearest ALHI Global Sales Office, or call the "ALHI Group Desk" toll-free at 866-303-2544, and visit www.alhi.com.

What Makes a Successful Sales Professional?

Seven key traits for effective sales from an industry veteran

During my career in convention sales, I've seen and participated in thousands of interactions between the salesperson and the customer. Through it all, these seven traits set apart the top performers:

1. Love what you do.

All truly successful salespeople love their career—they choose to sell a product or service that they relate to and are passionate about.

2. Know that character is everything.

In sales, you must have credibility. Success only happens if people trust and believe in you. Put yourself in the customer's shoes—how would you like to be treated? You'd want a salesperson to be straightforward, thoroughly understand your needs, and then present a well-researched, cost-effective solution.

3. Make a good first impression.

It's important to look sharp, have excellent eye contact and speak with energy and succinctness during those first meetings with prospects and customers – it determines how you'll be remembered!

4. Have a positive attitude.

We all have bad days, but a professional doesn't display these feelings in front of clients, and knows personal techniques to keep his or her energy high, like taking a walk or a coffee break.

5. Take notes and know your stuff.

Notes keep important information organized and prioritized, and also help you remember what a client asked for, what promises were made, and which issues need to be researched more. It's pivotal to exhaustively research your product and competitors, and to know your clients' needs in detail.

6. Welcome complaints.

Don't shy away from criticism or become defensive when a customer complains. You'll gain respect when you provide a calm demeanor and ready solution.

7. Never give up.

A sales career isn't always easy. Sometimes—like when you lose a big sale or customer—it can be depressing. Rather than give up, concentrate on all the reasons you can succeed.

—by Mary Beth Baluta
Regional Director of Sales
Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors Bureau



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Production Editors Needed for *The Chatter*

We need your help in taking the articles and making them into *The Chatter* newsletter we know and love. A great way to get involved with the PCMA Capital Chapter and become a member of the Communications Committee.

Requirements:

- Experience in Adobe Creative Cloud Required, specifically InDesign and Photoshop. *Access to the Creative Cloud provided.*
- 2 -3 issues/months in 2015.
- 6-10 hours per month commitment expected
- Schedule flexibility - production calendar is set, but is dynamic based on receipt of each necessary item.

For more information or to volunteer, email Shannon Burke, CMP at sburke@nacacnet.org.

PCMA Capital Chapter hosts Inagural Annual North American Meetings Industry Day Education and Rally

The PCMA Capital Chapter held its first Annual North American Meetings Industry Day event on Thursday, April 16th at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC. With over 150 Meetings Industry Professionals in attendance from across the region, we joined over 65 other events across America to raise awareness of the importance of the Meetings Industry to local, national and international economies.

Three breakout sessions on Grass Roots Impact, Local and Federal Regulations, and the Value of Meetings culminated with an open forum general session with leaders in our industry such as Don Neal, Founder and CEO at 360 live media; Solomon Keene, Jr., President of the Hotel Association of Washington, DC; Karen Kotowski, CAE, CMP, Chief Executive Officer of the Convention Industry Council; Greg O'Dell, President & CEO, EventsDC and many more local and national leaders. Within these sessions and the Industry Rally, we learned that the Meetings Industry represents 1 in every 9 jobs in the United States, and is the largest private sector employer in the District of Columbia! Our profession has an economic impact of over \$280 Billion annually along with hundreds of millions in tax revenue dollars every year. With statistics like that, meetings really do mean business!

The impact goes way beyond just jobs, and financial growth to our economy. Meetings are where the future of every industry, government, technological, social, medical, and any cause take shape. Without meetings, how would advancements in any field be shared, expanded upon, and contribute to the well being of our society as a whole, or as individuals? Meetings are education for professionals in every line of work. They launch new technology, and social awareness. Our industry creates experiences and human connections that last more than a life time. As the original form of "social media", the meetings industry has proven that nothing can replace the need for human interaction to advance ourselves, professions and society as a whole.

With a responsibility like that, events like our North American Meetings Industry day need to increase the awareness that what we do is much more than "plan parties", we create the stage where the future of society is created. This incredible event was rounded out by a fun parade to a Meetings Industry rally where we celebrated the importance of our industry and the collaboration of organizations across the country, like PCMA, who are a part of the growing Meetings Mean Business Coalition! •

*by John Rubsamen
Director of Meetings and Events, Americans for the Arts*



Photos by Christies Photographic Solutions

Planner Suggestions to Supplier Partners

The meetings industry is really a small community of event organizers and suppliers. While generally decisions are based on a business need, a strong relationship between a supplier and a planner could get your foot in the door. Here are a few tips collected from planners on how to best engage or strengthen the relationship between supplier and planner.

1. Do your research to know my business and when to reach out.

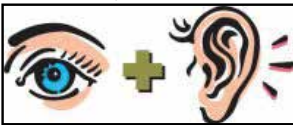
I am generally open to hearing about how your city, hotel, product can help me now or in the future. However, if you review my website and any of the following things: registration is opening or closing this week or my conference dates are within 1 month; please do not call to pitch new or potential business. Even if your pitch is absolutely perfect for something you know that I need – at the time that one of those events are going on, I will likely not have the wherewithal to listen or act. If you would like to reach out, an email saying good luck and you'll check back in a month would be appropriate.



2. Understand that fit is king for planners.

There are other factors like price, location, concessions that might sweeten or make the deal; but if the meeting does not fit in your space, it will be a deal breaker. The best option is to review the needs carefully and show what else could be done to accommodate the meeting. You know your space better than we do – so let us know if we have less than obvious options.

3. Be our eyes and ears with your other clients.



In theory, you see a lot of different things that your clients do. Certainly check with your client first to make sure they're okay with sharing and assuming they are, please share with us. Take photos of the cool entrance unit, buffet setup, stage set, and room décor. Share the floorplans that really work for good flow, different ways to engage attendees, new badge holders or giveaways.

Keep in mind that often the only outside conferences we are attending are the PCMA Annual Meeting or Springtime, so your organization's eyes are invaluable to us.

4. Know that our relationship can be life-long.

We know that our organization can't be everything to everyone, however know that there is always a possibility that we could move on to a new organization and find that perfect niche necessary to work with you. Building strong relationships can only help to grow business in time.

5. Be trustworthy and follow through on your promises.

We all know that this is a small community. As much as we will show our adoration from the rooftops when you do something awesome; we are just as talkative when you disappoint us. This is not to say you can't make a mistake – you just have to be honest with us and either create a solution or work with us to fix the error. Either of those will have us singing your praises. In this same vein, if we are doing something wrong or poorly – please give us the creative criticism necessary to make us better.



6. Help us inform the next generation of planners.

Mentors can come from every facet of our community. Please think of this as you meet new planners and engage with them at the beginning to learn the best practices from all sides.

7. Work hard and have fun.



Whereas this is usually not a necessary reminder, keep in mind that while we're not exactly saving lives, these jobs can be pretty stressful. While it is imperative that we are all working hard to keep things going, there should also always be time to take a breath and have a laugh. So keep a sense of humor and help remind us that laughter is the best medicine. •

by Shannon Burke, CMP, Director of Conference & Meetings, NACAC



Member Spotlights

Spotlight on a Planner

*Trina Armstrong
Director of Meetings
The American Society for Cell Biology*



Commitment to our industry is embodied by Trina Armstrong, director of meetings for the American Society for Cell Biology. If you haven't had a chance to meet Trina, make it happen! She is sincere, kind, dedicated, loyal, funny and a true advocate for advancing our industry.

Her life before meeting planning included being a legal secretary and paralegal. She started with ASCB as an executive assistant and when the meeting management was brought in-house, she was offered the position. She's been advancing professionally and personally ever since, but not without making time to mentor others, serve in a board capacity for the PCMA Chesapeake Chapter and contribute as a co-Track Chair for the Meetings & Exhibits portion of CESSE. She's served on numerous client advisory boards, is a member of PCMA's Capital Chapter and ASAE.

Her favorite thing about this industry is the ability to meet and work with so many wonderful people. Her family comes first and yet, she manages to contribute time to our industry with the support of the love of her life for 20 years, her husband Ken. For fun, Trina enjoys family time, hiking, wineries, dinner parties and is contemplating taking up golf. Her mentor shared with her the following advice: "Never ask or take anything for you personally" and Trina's abided by this throughout her career.

Her advice to someone new in the industry is, "Be honest and straightforward. Don't take things for granted. Do your homework before making that call or attending that meeting. Always be prepared and always be ethical. Treat people with kindness and respect and be true to your company or association's mission and goals." Great words to live by and we are fortunate to have such a committed professional in our Capital Chapter. •

*by Mary Gallagher, CMP
Director, citywide accounts
Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board*

Spotlight on a Supplier

*Sybil Davis
Senior Sales Executive
Renaissance Washington DC Downtown Hotel*



From her warm and engaging welcome, you can instantly tell that Sybil Davis made the right choice. She belongs in the hospitality industry, not science. After wrapping up her Bachelors of Science in Biology with a minor in Chemistry from Howard University early, she landed a

job at the Hyatt Regency Bethesda. After graduation, she returned to DC but not finding science-related jobs, she jumped back in the meetings industry. Since then, she has worked at 11 Marriott Hotels in the DC Area and is currently Senior Sales Executive at the Renaissance Washington DC Downtown Hotel.

It is obvious that Sybil's life experiences have instilled a strong outgoing nature which is contagious and makes you feel comfortable around her. Forging strong relationships and better understanding her clients is very important to her. Her clients become friends, and many participate in her Sunday night dinners. She also devotes service time to a young adult mentorship program in Washington, D.C.

Lastly, Sybil is also a big runner. She most recently ran the DC Rock n Roll ½ Marathon and a Disney Princess ½ Marathon. She likes to challenge herself every year with a "crazy idea." Last year, she completed twelve 5k races. This year, she is challenging herself to do more 10k's or greater, hence the ½ marathons. Sybil loves the camaraderie whether it is in running or in our industry. •

*by Will Trokey, CMP,
National Sales Manager
Visit Charlotte*



News Bytes

Email your news: PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com

ANDY FALTER IS NOW PRESIDENT FOR SPONSORSHIP RELIANCE GROUP

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BETH STRELITZ IS NOW DIRECTOR OF MEETING SERVICES AT THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION



PCMA CAPITAL CHAPTER STAR OF THE QUARTER CONGRATULATIONS TO ANNEMARIE O'DONOGHUE, MANAGER, MEETINGS AND SPONSORSHIPS, AMERICAN GAS ASSOCIATION



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

5/27 Quest for Talent
Education Program: 3:00pm - 5:00pm ET
Networking Reception: 5:00pm - 6:30 pm ET
Marriott Washington Wardman Park
Register: <http://bit.ly/QuestForTalent>

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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The Chatter is published by the
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