

the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter

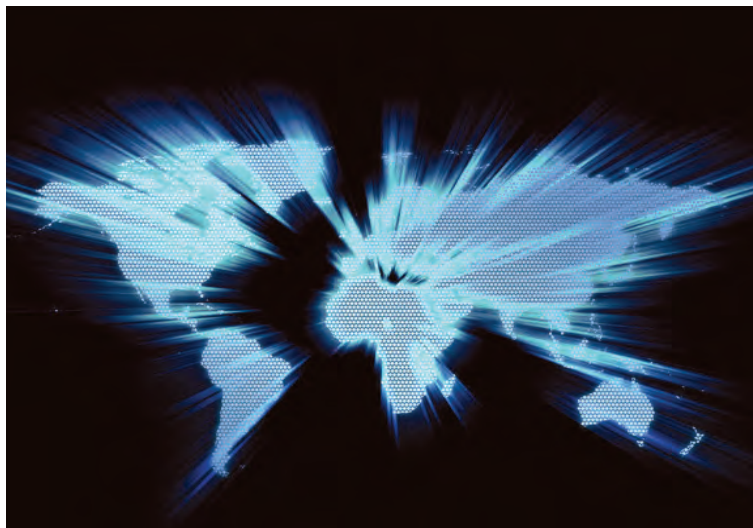
Global Meetings

When the International Monetary Fund and World Bank hold their Annual Meetings in Washington D.C., our industry is reminded of how a major global meeting can impact every aspect of our professional lives. Organizers race to secure special event venues, hotel rooms are hard to find, DMCs, decorators, transportation companies are stretched and restaurants try to keep up with demand. For at least one week in October, those that supply the meetings industry temporarily lose track of how the Redskins are doing – we have our own “big-game” in town.

It's no wonder that emerging markets around the globe are building the infrastructure to host global meetings and developing marketing strategies to draw these lucrative events to their region. A look at the statistics of international industry trade shows and cities such as Istanbul, New Delhi, Seoul, Rio de Janeiro and Kuala Lumpur, previously left off planners' shortlists, are emerging as premier destinations for major global meetings. Notable financial conferences are scheduled this fall in London, Johannesburg, Abu Dhabi and Hong Kong, leaving potential conference attendees many choices besides visiting Washington D.C. of when and where to travel.

An increasing number of associations are aligning themselves with world-wide federations or strategic partners beyond the borders to match their membership's appetite for global information. Trade associations open new

business opportunities for their members, and professional associations seek to share best practices among a larger and diverse audience. Associations reap the benefits of additional revenues from larger events and as students enter the workforce with an understanding of globalization, and their skills are a good match for conference planners looking to reach a broader community.



When considering the economic impact of hosting global meeting—generally longer length of stays, more money spent per attendee and groups willing to meet over traditionally lower demand (holiday) dates—it makes sense that our own CVB, Destination DC, established an International Convention Sales department in 2010 where the main focus is international association conference/congress bidding. Charged with

increasing the number of global meetings hosted in the District, this venture offers career opportunities to emerging professionals with international business expertise and engages new customers from all over the world. As the local calendar continues to fill up with new international meetings, keep an eye on February 3rd. We know that these efforts require broad involvement from the entire city, but if the Redskins get on a roll, there is still one “big game” this town won't miss. •

*by Drew Squeglia,
Senior Sales Manager, Omni Shoreham Hotel
Emerging Professionals Committee Member*

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.

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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

Liz Dane, Marketing Services Liaison



The Global Brand of ... YOU!

In this issue of *The Chatter*, we are focusing on Global Meetings. This is an important topic for many organizations that are expanding their meetings into overseas and emerging markets. But, what about the idea of yourself as a "global Brand"?

It has become evident in the last few years that our digital footprint is a much larger scope than we ever imagined. We know that people are basing decisions on travel, meetings, and major purchases via word of digital mouth and images. Travelers are not consulting paper guides for travel as they are reading online reviews and experiences. We want to reach out and touch people digitally as we are looking for personal advice on what to do, where to stay, what to rent. Travelers are willing to pay to sleep on a strangers' futon to experience an up close travel experience. We are sharing our cars for rides.

Our Global world is smaller. We, as planners and suppliers have to take a look at how we are presenting ourselves in this digital world. If a stranger were to look at your facebook page, how would your brand be viewed? What would your personal/business brand say about you?

John Rubsamen, Director of Meetings for Americans for the Arts advises, "You are what you type". He further suggests "If you wouldn't be comfortable standing in front of five thousand people sharing a picture or making a statement, you probably don't want to share that online." John has a rule of thumb when it comes to his personal social media habits, "don't post anything if you have been drinking!"

Always remember: You are your own Global Brand. Market your brand as the fabulous YOU! •



Connect with the Capital Chapter!



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This issue focuses on global issues for planners. If you are a domestic planner/supplier you may think, how does this apply to me? Well, international and global issues apply to all categories of group travel no matter if its local or worldwide. Being in touch with issues and trends will help in any aspect of your events and career. So stay connected... Globally and the PCMA Capital chapter is here to help!

Keep Planning, Keep Growing, Keep Connected!

Attracting Global Attendees to Your US Located Conference

You've decided to grow your conference by targeting global attendees, now you need to do what you can to assist them in getting there. First and foremost, ensure that your conference web site has all the information about both the conference itself and you, the sponsoring organization. Since the State Department no longer lists conferences on its intranet, embassies look to event web sites to verify the events. Second, include links to the state department web site for general visa information, the visa waiver program and a link for them to contact your organization to request an invitation letter. In general, the attendee will need an invitation letter from the sponsoring organization when they go for their visa interview.

The invitation letter is nothing to be worried about and in my experience, people requesting them are legitimate. If you have a concern about the person requesting an invitation letter, and they are not a member or registered yet, a quick internet search usually confirms their organization. If not, you can always request more information about them or require them to register (and pay) before you issue a letter.

The attendee's name and physical address, a confirmation of the event, dates and location, event program, and details surrounding the sponsoring organization all need to be included in the visa letter. Lastly, it invites the attendee to participate in the conference but reinforces that the letter is an invitation only and includes not financial commitment from the organization. We also include a reminder that the letter does not preclude registering for the conference. The letter should be on official letterhead and signed by the executive director or CEO. We scan the letters and email them to the attendees rather than mailing or shipping them to ensure quick receipt. If requested, we will send hard copies following the email. As long as it is on letterhead, the embassy will take the electronic version.

In short, by doing a few simple things, you can assist your global attendees in attending your event. •



by Lisa L Dyson, CMP, Director of Conference Services, TESOL International Association



The Platform To Increase Exhibit And Sponsorship Sales

October 24, 2013 | City Club | Washington, DC

Sam Lippman's Exhibit Sales Roundtable (ESR) is an invitation-only forum for today's exhibit sales and service professionals to exchange best practices with their peers. At ESR, you will share the latest sales techniques with other industry experts in order to strengthen your exhibit floor and sponsorships. ESR provides the opportunity for a select group to meet, network, learn and share in a hands-on, interactive format.

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Produced and Facilitated by Sam Lippman

Sam Lippman is a trained facilitator and executive-level consultant with 36 years of hands-on experience as a show manager. He is the producer of Exhibition and Convention Executives Forum (ECEFF), Attendee Acquisition Roundtable (AAR), Exhibit Sales Roundtable (ESR) and Large Show Roundtable (LSR).

How to Engage Local Groups to Participate in your Conference

Planning an international conference can be daunting; many logistics are vastly different from those in the US that it is often hard to know where to begin. From printing services to marketing and outreach, local groups such as companies, associations, schools or media outlets can make the difference between a good international meeting and a truly successful international meeting.

One of the most successful ways that our company has utilized the local groups is through our Cooperating Entity Program. For each of our meetings, we reach out to local law firms, bar organizations, schools and associations and invite them to participate in our conference as a cooperating entity. If they agree to be a Cooperating Entity, members of their organization or company will receive the discounted membership rate for our conference, the organization is able to send materials to be displayed at our conference and their logo in our marketing collateral.



In exchange, that group will market to their membership and encourage further registration; often, they will also assist with local logistics or translation if the program is in a non-English speaking country. We find that this program significantly helps us boost not only our registration revenue, but has also generated some new membership for us through new attendees at our meetings, as well as ease some of the difficulties that you can face with local vendors. Overall, this is a great way to encourage local participation in your conference and help you as a meeting planner with many of the small, but important, logistics.

There is truly no end to the ways that you can utilize local groups in your conference; cooperating entities are just one example. No matter how you encourage local groups or even local individuals to participate in the planning and execution of your program, their participation will ensure an optimal outcome for and excellent participation in your international conference. •

by Curry Wilson, Meeting Planner, American Bar Association Section of International Law



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They Way We Do Business Is Not The Only Way to Do Business

Have you ever noticed that everyone has a great story, good or bad, about doing an international meeting? It seems as the world is “flattening,” many in our industry are gaining international experience at an ever accelerating rate. With more exposure, comes more potential for miss-steps in planning a meeting abroad. My top three challenges people experience in planning meetings abroad are contracts, professionalism/etiquette and time sensitivity.

Contracts take on whole new meaning when going outside the U.S. International legal representation is a key factor in the success of your event. Knowing and understanding the ins and outs of the legal obligations and rights of the entity you represent should be reviewed by someone who knows the legal system in the country the event is being held. From labor relations, food and beverage, and rigging, there are liability issues that need to be covered contractually. The U.S. State Department is a great asset to use in order to find local resources and contacts.

Professionalism and etiquette are other key factors in the success of an event abroad. Understanding key cultural differences in work and social settings in the country you are having a meeting helps exponentially in the accomplishment of the event. In most countries outside the U.S., business relationships are much more formal. Allow the other culture to take the lead. The written word is scrutinized and taken literally so don't write a response email without taking some time to read and re-read what you wrote.



Working on an international event is a 24-hour gig. Be prepared to answer emails and phone calls around the clock. Conversely, be prepared for a 12 hour turn around in responses. In some cases it does take a while to get the response. This drives “Type A” people crazy especially with certain cultures that are a bit more relaxed than us crazy over worked Americans. Lastly, when planning an international meeting time, take into account travel schedules and jet lag. Meeting schedules abroad should ease people into the time zone. •

—by Jake Smith, National Accounts Manager, Freeman

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Don't Let Your Communication Get "Lost in Translation"

When planning international meetings, or working with international counterparts, we must remember that English in most cases is not their primary language, and in some cases it is their third or fourth language. Many have been schooled in textbook English, which is much more formal and unfamiliar to many Americans, causing at times communication barriers. Terminology varies not only by country, but by facility and by person. Don't rely solely on email communication, as there are times when a phone conversation can show greater insight into a situation and resolve it before it becomes an issue.

From contracts, to room setup, to food and beverage, to audio visual equipment, many English words have different meanings. Listed below are some of the commonly misunderstood words and phrases:

North American Term

Acts of God
Attendee
Attrition
Badge
Breakout Room(s)
Calendar/Appointment Schedule
Conference Style
Cutoff Date
Daily Meeting Package
Date Format: MM/DD/YYYY
Entrée
Exhibits
Final Program
First Name
General Session
Last Name
LCD Projector
Line
Meeting Planner
Podium
Request for Proposal (RFP)
Room Rental
Site Inspection
Sponsorship
Tap Water
Theater Style

International Term

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Reduction
Credential
Syndicate Room(s)
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Organizer
Lectern
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Room Hire
Show Around
Subsidy
Flat Water
Concert Style



In addition to terminology, there are deadline, production and punctuality differences that vary by country.

For example: guarantees are typically due 72 hours prior to the event in North America, where in Europe and Asia they can be required several weeks in advance. Deposits are common in North America, but prepayment is the norm in Europe. Gratuities are additional in North America, but are included Internationally. Standard booth walls in North America are drape, but Internationally they are hardwall (MDF).

You will find that by taking a few minutes to consider the customs, protocol and terminology of the destination early in your planning process, you will greatly improve the communication and understanding of all parties. •

*by Catherine A. Chenevey, CMP, Project Manager,
Events and Virtual Content Manager, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics*

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VAT Reclamation, Fixed-Rate Exchange Contracts, and Forward Contracts: How to Save Money and Reduce Risk Internationally

In 1954, France became the first country to impose a value added tax (VAT). A VAT is a tax levied on the value added to goods or services (calculated as the sales price minus the cost of materials and any other inputs). Like corporate or personal income tax, VAT generates tax revenue for a government and today, more than 140 countries, excluding the United States, charge a VAT ranging from 4.5 percent to 25.5 percent.

What does this mean for planners? For meetings and business travel, VAT (also known as the goods and services tax (GST) in Australia and New Zealand or the IVA in Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking countries) is partially refundable. Unfortunately, the reclamation process involves lots of paperwork and the rules, rates, and details about refund-eligible meeting expenses vary significantly by country. Therefore, often the best solution is to work with a VAT reclamation company who can help you navigate the process and obtain the highest refund possible. Typically, a VAT reclaim company charges a percentage based on the amount of VAT recovered.



There are also levels of risk associated with dealing with foreign currency. The best way to mitigate this risk is to negotiate supplier contracts in US dollars. However, this may not always be possible so another option is to use fixed-rate exchange contracts where you agree on a fixed rate of exchange with each supplier and for each contract. Another lesser known, but safe option, is to buy a forward contract. Simply put, this means locking in an exchange rate today for a specific amount of currency that you can use at a later date (usually within 12 months). While the host country's exchange rate could strengthen against the US dollar, the advantage of a fixed-rate exchange contract and a forward contract is that you can be protected from fluctuations in exchange rates.

With more and more meetings being hosted overseas, save your organization money by budgeting for the appropriate VAT rate, exploring the use of a VAT reclaim company, and considering fixed-rate exchange contracts and forward contracts. •

by Tiffany Melton, CMP, Director, Meeting Logistics, J. Spargo & Associates, Inc.

Selecting the Right Partners for International Meetings & Events

Conducting meetings outside of the continental United States can present any number of challenges. The good news is that you are not the first person to have and do this and 99.9% of the issues you are concerned with have already been experienced and resolved by other planners and the partners they chose to work with.

The selection of the right international partner is not only going to help insure the successful execution of your event, but they can also help you manage the 'soft' issues of:

Cultural differences

- Social Etiquette
- Business Practices

Communication

- Language
- Phone vs. E-Mail

Money

- Exchange Rates
- Billing in U.S. dollars or other currency
- Taxes (VAT)

Make sure your partner has worked with U.S. based meetings previously, do not put yourself in a position where you and your partner are learning together by selecting a partner that has never worked on a U.S. program. Conversely the selection of the right partner can not only help with the technical and tactical components of your event, but also address the above issues is going to make the experience better for all stakeholders. Let them know early on that it is acceptable and expected for them to help you navigate issues such as etiquette, communications and currency related issues.

In addition to selecting the right partner, leverage your existing partner relationships to maximize your experience. Assuming they do not have the ability to directly help you and provide the appropriate service needed (or you would have already contracted with them) considering bringing them on board as a 'consultant'. They have a working knowledge of your organizations, its idiosyncrasies, and are going to be a good position to help you in advance of the meeting and on-site. Their familiarity with your event, key staff members, speakers, exhibitors, and board members are going to help minimize the addition of more moving parts to the list you already have. •

by Jim Kelley, Director Global Accounts, PRG



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Rewind – Let’s Audit the IRS 2010 Conference I.G. Report: Part 2

Welcome to Part Two of the review of the IRS Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) Review for the August 2010 Conference report from the hospitality industry perspective. This article will breakdown the \$4.1 million figure used to fund a conference of 2,000 attendees.

Fact 2 – The IRS spent the \$4.1 million for the conference in an appropriate fashion. The IRS did not at that time have any guidelines requirement management to track and report actual conference costs.

The figure \$4,133,183 is a very attractive figure for salacious newspaper and twitter headlines. Again this is all smoke and no fire. The ignored yet relevant details are that this conference fell under the SB/SE (Small Business/Self-Employed) Division. This division was allocated \$132.7 million in FY 2010 to hire and train 1,315 full time employees. Specifically \$18 million was set aside for training. In preparing for the August 2010 conference \$3.2 million of the \$18 million training budget was transferred to August 2010 conference budget. The audit report confirmed that the auditors “did not identify any restrictions preventing the IRS from using these available funds to pay for the conference.”

The August 2010 conference was a 3-day conference in Anaheim for 2,609 attendees. The goals and objectives of the conference were to educate IRS SB/SE employees on the following initiatives: “improving the reporting compliance of taxpayers, addressing nonfiling/underpayment and collection coverage, reducing the Tax Gap attributable to globalization, and expanding the document matching for small business taxpayers.”

Viewing the total budget into relative numbers, this conference cost \$1,584.20 per person or \$528 per person per day. Keep in mind that this number includes all travel, lodging and food costs. As an industry standard, the spending for this conference was executed in a fiscally conservative and responsible fashion.

Conclusion: No alarming finding here. However, the IRS should establish a reporting mechanism to accurately track and report on conference costs.

Next time we’ll tackle the issue of the use of third-party planners. •

— by Tamela Blalock, MTA, CMP, Courtesy Associates

CSC Links Hospitality High School Internship Program with Local Organization and PCMA Members

Hospitality High School (HHS) - have you heard of such a thing? Just the name alone sparked my interest. I personally had never heard about such a high school until I read an article in *The Chatter*. HHS is the nation’s first public charter high school that introduces students to careers in hospitality management. *The Chatter* article was specifically about a summer internship program for students who attended the school.

I contacted HHS to obtain information about the school, as well as, learn more about the internship program they offered. I spoke with the Hospitality Coordinator, Michael Cucciardo, who provided detailed information about the school, the students, and typical internships that past students had participated in. At first it sounded like it was more geared towards the hotel industry rather than an association, however, Mr. Cucciardo quickly diminished that thought. Yes, most of the internship opportunities were afforded by the hotel industry, but what a great opportunity to open up a new avenue and perspective for career opportunities in the industry.

We participated in a Job Fair at HHS where face to face interviews took place with perspective candidates. We were notified a few days later that Mary Beard, a rising senior at the time, had been assigned to NASPA, student affairs administrators in higher education. Mary spent six weeks at NASPA. She attended internal planning meetings, created several event specific catering menus, drafted meeting specifications for smaller programs, as well as assisted us with inventory and ordering of supplies for our annual conference. She was very excited about what she was learning and enthusiastic about how the meeting logistics came together.

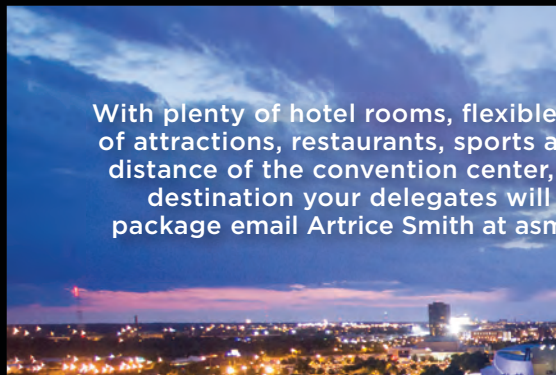
As a planner in this industry, I’m thankful that the Capital Chapter of PCMA is building such a strong partnership with HHS. This year the Hospitality High School was selected to be the Capital Chapter’s charity of the year because it not only benefits a local school, but directly impacts our industry.

Hospitality internships are not just for the hotel/restaurant side of the industry. Consider them as a valuable asset to the association/corporate market as well. Open the door at your organization! •

— by Arlene A. Kidwell
Senior Director of Meetings/Conferences
NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education



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*Something new and different to celebrate the Year
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Capital Chapter Member Spotlights

Spotlight on a Supplier

Jamie Ades

*Senior Account Manager – Corporate
International Convention Centre
(ICC London ExCeL)*



One of the first things you notice about Jamie Ades is his infectious laugh, which you hear often thanks to his wry wit. “If you want to make the article more interesting,” he quips, “you can add that I jump from buildings or something.” But Jamie’s history is already interesting – no embellishment necessary!

Jamie began his career in the hospitality industry at age 16, when he worked at the front desk of the Ashford International Hotel & Conference Center. After the Ashford Hotel, Jamie moved to London with the historic One Great George Street hotel then the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. Jamie recently took a new position at the International Conference Centre, ExCeL London.

As a far-flung member of the Capital Chapter, Jamie appreciates the ability to serve on Communication Committee, “It’s difficult because I can’t attend the [Capital] chapter events, but serving on the communication committee is a great way to keep in touch and make contacts even though I can’t attend the networking events,” says Jamie.

Jamie is a lover of theater, cinema, and the arts – he’s recently seen theater productions of *Wicked* and *Priscilla*, as well *Green Day* in concert. Inspired by a train ride from Los Angeles to the Grand Canyon, his dream vacation would be a cross-country tour of the US by rail. •

—by *Janeé Pelletier, MBA, CMP*
Vice President, Conference & Logistics Consultants, Inc.

Spotlight on a Planner

Madeleine Sellouk

*Senior Events Manager
AM Petroleum Institute*



Born in Germany, Madeleine grew up in England and was educated in Europe and the states. She came to America around age 16 to visit Mom and got her meeting planner feet wet working for NIH before returning to England. During her next “visit” to

America, she applied to API as a secretary and within six months drifted into meeting planning. It seems after 36 years with API, this Senior Events Manager has found both a career and home.

Madeleine loves the challenge and intensity of meeting planning. She’s learned that you must be adaptable; people oriented, good at crisis management, and prepared to deal with and move on when you hit road blocks. Her favorite parts of the job are making disgruntled attendees smile and making long lasting industry friends.

Madeleine joined PCMA for its emphasis on associations and strong education content. She likes learning from the “Big Guys” and developing relationships outside of tradeshow settings.

She enjoys historical novels, gardening, and on her bucket list is vacationing in Thailand with family. Meeting the Dalai Lama was amazing and given the chance, Madeleine would love to dine with Warren Buffett and learn how to make “little money” grow. •

—by *Marilyn Atchue-Zuill*
Crowne Plaza Redondo Beach and Marina Hotel

The Community Services Committee announces its Fall Volunteer Project!

We are currently recruiting volunteers for the N Street Village Walkathon taking place on Saturday, Oct. 19, 2013. Volunteers are needed to greet walkers, hand out t-shirts, and fill other duties TBA. Shift will run from approximately 8:30 a.m. to Noon. The walk will begin at the N Street Village location, 1333 N Street NW, Washington, DC.

If you’re interested in volunteering, please email Community Services Committee member Radell Peischler, CMP at radell.peischler@gmail.com.



News Bytes

Email your news: PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com

MARK ADAMS has been appointed the new director of sales at Terranea Resort, Los Angeles' premier oceanfront resort.

SHANNON BURKE, CMP is now the Director for Conference and Meetings at the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

BETHANY CHIRICO, CMP is now the Vice President, Events Management and Delivery at the American Bankers Association.

Congratulations to the following Capital Chapter members elected to the 2014 PCMA Board of Directors:

Secretary-Treasurer, **WILLIAM F. REED, FASAE, CMP**, American Society of Hematology

NANCY DEBROSSE, CMP, Experient, Inc.

KRISTIN K. MIRABAL, CMP, The Optical Society.

Congratulations to the winners of the PCMA Capital Chapter Scholarship:

ELSBETH "BETH" O'BRIEN, CMP, SHRM

KATHARINE GAUSMANN, American Feed Industry Association

MINDY HALPERT, Consortium for School Networking (CoSN).



Mark Your Calendar

CAPITAL CONNECTION

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

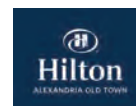
**10/19 Community Service Event
N Street Village Walkathon**
8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
N Street Village
1333 N Street, NW, Washington DC
Contact: radell.peischler@gmail.com

11/7 Service in Sync
Capital Area Food Bank
Shift 1: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Shift 2: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Registration to open soon
Contact: rink@visitphoenix.com

11/18 The Event
(formerly known as the PCMA Capital Chapter Annual Meeting)
Arena Stage, Washington DC

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