

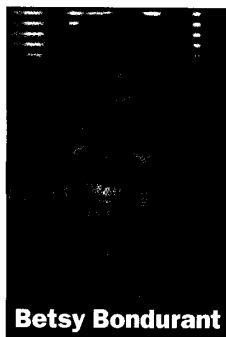
## ASSOCIATION NEWS

## MPI Reformulates Corporate Group

Dallas — With the meetings industry increasingly grappling with issues of procurement and accountability, Meeting Professionals International has re-focused its Corporate Circle of Excellence, while expanding its membership internationally.

In addition, MPI is liaising with the International Association of Conference Centers on a number of educational and marketing programs, evidence of further cooperation among professional meeting-oriented organizations.

MPI's newly re-named Global Corporate Circle of Excellence now has members that come from Europe and Canada as well as the United States.



Also, the group will grapple with the current big issue, procurement. It hopes to produce a white paper before year-end on how meeting planners can work toward greater efficiencies with travel and purchasing departments.

The Circle was founded in 1999 to give senior corporate meeting professionals an opportunity to discuss the issues they face on a day-to-day basis involving strategic direction and policies, particularly return on investment. The intention was to come to conclusions and share them with the corporate planner community as a whole. However, the effort stalled after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The group's strategic goals also now

have been aligned with MPI's strategic plan, dubbed Pathways to Excellence, which stresses planner professional development, and promotes the notion that meetings are integral to corporate strategies.

"We want not only to give corporate meeting professionals the tools they can use to help them manage their duties, but also to help them elevate themselves within their organizations," said Betsy Bondurant, Global Circle of Excellence co-chairwoman and associate director of meeting planning and trade shows for Amgen, the big biotechnology company based in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

As for MPI's new relationship with IACC, the meetings organization will contribute members for IACC's customer roundtable at IACC's annual meeting, slated for Roanoke, Va., in April.

Conversely, for its annual World Education Conference next year, MPI is considering working with IACC to develop some of the education, and not just creating a conference center commercial.

In addition, IACC members in the conference center-heavy town of Chicago are planning to host 25 to 50 buyers — MPI members and non-members alike — at a luncheon or similar event to promote both conference centers and MPI.

Also on the marketing side, the two organizations are hammering out details for some IACC-sponsored supplements that will appear in the Meeting Professional, MPI's publication, in the U.S. and beyond.

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