

MPI And PCMA Multicultural Toolkit Is First Of Several Proposed Joint Projects

By Alexis Gray

The first of several proposed projects between Meeting Professionals International (MPI) and the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) is a toolkit to help their various chapters promote diversity and multicultural issues.

The new MPI-PCMA Multicultural Education Program will launch the toolkit in January 2005.

Among other future plans are scholarships, joint educational programs and leadership opportunities focusing on the African-American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian and Native American markets in the meeting industry.

Karen Garcia-Gonzales, managing director of MPI's multicultural initiative said "We chose the toolkit as our first task because we wanted something deliverable and that would explain about diversity and multiculturalism – that it's not all about affirmative action, it's about inclusion."

Garcia-Gonzales added that MPI wanted to focus on these areas for business opportunities. "We're hoping to help people understand who isn't coming to the table, and bring those people to table," said Garcia-Gonzales.

The toolkit is designed to help for meetings planners, and will include certain protocol such as what an awareness campaign or other campaign would entail, references

to national organizations and where to find resources.

The toolkit will supply recommendations on educational and professional development as it relates to cultural awareness, marketing and business opportunities in their respective markets, according to Kelly Schulz, MPI Director of Communications.

"It's almost like a to-do box relating to multiculturalism and diversity," added Garcia-Gonzales.

As was announced in July following MPI's World Education Congress in Denver, the two organizations have tentative plans to collaborate on several projects, though no others have been finalized. David Kushner, CMP, CAE, president and CEO of PCMA

and the PCMA Foundation told *USAE*.

"We have a number of items that we've discussed, such as research, education issues and fund-raisers, but none except the multicultural project is formally in place," said Kushner.

In reference to the multicultural toolkit, Colin Rorrie Jr., PhD, CAE, president and CEO of MPI said, "This type of project epitomizes one of MPI's principles I refer to as 'the power of the partnership.'"

Rorrie added, "Whether its multicultural issues, chapter support, or professional development, we will continue to collaborate with industry peers and other associations for the advancement of the meeting profession."