



MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

DEFINE

MPI
OHIO CHAPTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL OHIO CHAPTER

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MPIOH Mission Statement:

To enhance the overall quality and awareness of the meetings industry by ensuring the professional development and growth of its membership through targeted educational programs and networking opportunities.

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President's Column

By: Julie Kowalewski
Director Sales & Marketing, Cincinnati Marriott at River Center



Dear MPI Colleagues and Friends,

I adore this time of year. When my weeping cherry tree is in bloom, I am a happy girl. Dance recitals, the start of Red's season, Derby Day, Mother's Day, the start of gin and tonic season - there are so many reasons to celebrate in the spring. Above all, this time of year makes me think of Graduation Season. I have a kindergartner celebrating her graduation this year. Pardon me while I pick myself up out of the puddle of tears.

One of my favorite parts of the commencement celebration is the keynote speech. Whether it's the shy valedictorian or the distinguished alumni, I am always eager to hear what their message is for the impending graduates. Like many beginning their next chapter in life, I too am passing the baton to my colleague and friend, Jason Linscott, to lead us next year as the MPI Ohio Chapter President. In the spirit of delivering a final message, I'd like to share with you some wisdom that was imparted to me last week. I was fortunate to attend a panel discussion on Woman in Leadership at the Aimbridge Hospitality annual sales meeting. This panel was led by our Chief Financial Officer, Judy Hendrick. This was Judy's parting message for the women who were assembled:

- Don't expect to be perfect. Know who you are and believe in yourself.
- Don't compromise your core values.
- Recognize your strengths and build on them.
- Move out of your comfort zone – be courageous.
- Expand your sphere of influence – network and mentor.

My time as the MPI Ohio Chapter President has been wildly exciting, very challenging, and ultimately one of the most professionally fulfilling experiences of my career thus far. I thank you for your support and I wish you the best in your career and your life. Thank you for allowing MPI Ohio Chapter to be a part of both.

Kindly,

Julie

Julie Kowalewski
2014/2015 MPI Ohio Chapter President

The Future of Meetings

By Mariela McLwraith, CMP, CMM, MBA

Thank you so much to the MPI Ohio Chapter for inviting me to share in the first annual North American Meetings Industry Day (NAMID)! Below is a recap of the session, along with resources for each of topic areas we covered.



The Economic Significance of the Meetings Industry

- According to a study commissioned by the Convention Industry Council and conducted by PwC, the meetings industry contributed more than \$280 billion to the U.S. national economy and put another \$88 billion back into the economy through federal, state and local taxes in 2012.
- The meetings industry contributes more to U.S. national GDP than the air transportation, motion picture, sound recording, performing arts and spectator sport industries.

Resources:

- Convention Industry Council, Economic Significance Study. Available from: <http://www.conventionindustry.org/ResearchInfo/EconomicSignificanceStudy.aspx>

The Business of Meetings

- According to Martin Sirk, CEO, International Congress and Convention Association (SmartMeetings, April 2015), "Market leaders are no longer waiting to bid on conferences. Instead, they are creating new international events." In light of this, I believe we'll see the services offered by meeting professionals to evolve into areas that support start-ups and we'll be lending our expertise to help grow new events.
- Meeting professionals will need to become more skilled in protecting against poaching and piracy, and will need to be more strategic in the use of eRFPs.
- Event sponsorship models will become more flexible and will sponsors will be increasingly integrated into the event.

Resources:

- Convention Industry Council, Poaching and Piracy Toolkit. Available from: <http://www.conventionindustry.org/StandardsPractices/APEX/roomblocks.aspx>

Meeting Technology

- The future of meeting technology is around now, and is becoming mainstream. That said, we are just scratching the surface on how this technology can enhance meetings.
- Mobile event apps will be used more effectively for data analytics and engaging audiences year round.
- Hybrid events will be better designed for two distinct audiences.

- Audience response systems will be used to develop post-event content.
- Lead retrieval systems will be paired with training on engaging potential clients.
- Gamification will be better aligned with organizational and event goals.

Resources:

- If you're interested in learning more about mobile event apps, please check out the certificate program that I helped to develop with QuickMobile where you can earn up to 10 hours of CEs. Use the discount code partner20 to receive a 20% discount. It is available from: <http://info.quickmobile.com/Mobile-App-Certificate-Program.html>

Sustainable Events

- Our industry professionals have an important role to play in identifying and reporting human trafficking in our venues and in our supply chain.
- Our events need to be designed to be inclusive, and to break down participation barriers. The decisions we make related to planning, facilities, room setups, communication, speaker selection, transportation, food & beverage, schedule, marketing and resources can make our events more inclusive and accessible.
- Addressing food waste is a win for the environment, society and our financial bottom line. The food waste priorities are to first reduce supply chain food loss, then reduce the amount of food we waste at our events, repurpose or donate leftovers and compost.

Resources:

- Hotel training related to ending human trafficking is available from www.code.org
- Coming soon! Meet Better: 167 Easy Ways to Make Your Events More Environmentally and Socially Responsible (a book I co-authored with Shawna McKinley and Nancy Zavada) will be out in June. The book can be preordered (with a 20% discount) using the discount code preorder from <http://meetgreen.com/shop/>
- Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act: <http://www.foodtodonate.com/Fdcmain/LegalLiabilities.aspx>

Meeting Design

- Meetings will be designed for the needs of Generation C and how they thrive on connection, community, creation and curation.
- Meeting formats will have greater participant focus, flexible programs and setups and more participation options.
- There are many forces affecting meeting design, as identified in MPI's Future of Meetings research. These include concerns about political instability, privacy control, threat to travel and technology.

Resources:

- MPI's Future of Meetings: The Bottom Line Delegate Insights, Future Scenarios and Practical Tips. Available from: <http://www.mpiweb.org/Portal/Research/FutureofMeetings>

If you have any questions about this material, please contact me at mariela@meetingchange.com or on twitter @meetingchange.



Mariela McIlwraith, CMP, CMM, MBA

is President of Meeting Change and Executive Editor of the Convention Industry Council 9th Edition.

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MPI Ohio Chapter Announces 2015-2016 Board of Directors

Term Starts: July 1, 2015

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Your Next High Stakes, or “Crucial” Conversation Part II

In a recent issue of Define, I shared with you a couple of reasons that High Stakes or “Crucial” Conversations, as we call them at Southam Consulting, don’t always go well. So, let’s talk solutions – How can you and I overcome the tendency to react poorly during a Crucial Conversation?

The first issue we looked at was that, when faced with these conversations, we naturally react as though the other person is a threat. This causes the “Fight or Flight” response, leaving our brains starved of oxygen and everything else they need to function well. The problem here then is that the higher order reasoning portion of your brain has turned off. The solution? You can restart your brain as you focus on what you really want.

In moments when another individual disagrees with them, becomes frustrating, or just plain says something that seems dumb, people best at holding Crucial Conversations are able to transcend what their impulses say they want in the moment: to punish, blame, beat up, convince, compel, or otherwise conquer or escape their opponent. Instead, they’re able to zero in on what they really want; what they want for the future or the long-term relationship. In other words, they look beyond the instant gratification or relief of somehow harming the other person or escaping from them.

The simple, but deeply meaningful and effective way to handle these moments is to ask yourself a question when you’re faced with a fight or flight impulse. In the moment when you are tempted to hit the other person or run away, stop and ask yourself what you really want. Try asking yourself something like, “What do I want to have happen down the road as a result of this interaction?”

The simple act of posing that question to your brain indicates that the interaction is not one that should be seen as a threat, but rather an opportunity for improving a relationship or an outcome. In fact, the best in class, who our partners at VitalSmarts learned this technique from in their research, seem to know intuitively that these Crucial Conversations, if handled well, lead directly to improved outcomes. Such outcomes are better than they ever could have been, had the conflict never occurred. What usually happens when these conversations go poorly can be traced back to reactions and words that made it look like we were more interested in conflict or escape than dialogue or resolution.

The second issue we looked at was that we’re very prone to the “Fundamental Attribution Error.” In other words, when others act in a way that we don’t like or even just don’t expect, we tend to attribute negative motivations to them. The important thing here to remember

is that this is an error; we almost always get those motivations wrong. But, we stick to those conclusions, sometimes even arguing that they’re accurate. Admittedly, I can recall when I’ve personally done that in the face of overwhelming evidence that indicated otherwise... Oops!

The technique to prevent or derail the Fundamental Attribution Error is similar to what we discussed above. In fact, this error is often the driver for the flight or fight response that we fall victim to. The reason is that we build a story in our heads about the other person and their intentions, one where they are a villain and we’re the innocent sufferers of their diabolical deeds. If we convince ourselves that they truly are ill-intentioned, it seems pretty justifiable to fight them or to run away, much like it would seem justifiable with a physical threat from a wild animal. The key here then is to debunk the villain story and debunk our position as a helpless sufferer, thus circumventing our self-preservation defense mechanisms.

Two questions can bring success here. The first, to debunk the villain idea is, “Why would a reasonable, rational, decent person act this way?” When we see the other person as decent, we cause ourselves to re-examine our beliefs and look for different explanations of their motives.

Decent people do things for decent reasons, or at least reasons understandable from their perspective. The second question, to debunk the victim idea is, “What am I pretending not to notice about my role in the problem.” In my experience, when there is a disagreement or a failure to converge on a solution, I can be blamed for at least part of it. It’s essential to take a moment to examine your own behavior because that’s ultimately the only thing you can change.

So, there you have it – a couple of key ideas to lead to more success in your next Crucial Conversation. I wish you the very best and great success when that moment comes!

Want some help with your next Crucial Conversation or need a great speaker for an upcoming event? Visit the Southam Consulting website at www.southamconsulting.net or contact us at 740.453.4547.

AJ Righter currently works for Southam Consulting as a speaker, coach and facilitator for professionals at all levels of organizations. He specializes in the areas of culture change, influencing behavior change in the workplace, accountability, high stakes conversations and other key drivers of performance. His work experience includes projects in the private sector, government and non-profits. His formal training includes degrees in the social sciences and research into what drives human behavior.



facility, the destination, and vendors. External communication is also important, and this includes communication with news media, and contact with families and friends of those people who are directly affected by or involved in the crisis.

Your crisis management plan should contain an emergency contact list within the plan. Plan a 'phone tree' in advance for emergency communication: this means that no one person is responsible for calling everyone involved. Each person

calls from 1 to 3 people, creating a 'trickle-down' effect until all involved have been contacted.

Be Prepared For the Media

Don't forget to include media representatives in your contact list. Remember that the media won't wait for a carefully crafted story, so it's very important that you have someone on-site with media training. If the media are unable to get the 'hot' story from you, they'll get it elsewhere. To be in control of the message that's being

released you must be organized and prepared. We trust this brief article will point you in the right direction when planning your next meeting. Be prepared for any crisis, and you'll find that because you're organized and prepared, you probably won't experience any crises at all. And as mentioned before, doing anything at all is much better than doing nothing. Be prepared, and keep your meetings safe.

MPI Website Offers Members An Improved Resource for Job Connections

By Blair Potter

MPI Ohio members should check out the industry career page at Meeting Professionals International. The MPI website is a great way to find out more about your industry and advance your career. The updated "Industry Careers" job portal is designed to connect job seekers with employers who are looking to hire, and now features simpler navigation and better information organization.

According to Michael Crumrine, MPI's senior director of information technology, the updates enhance what was already a very popular feature of the association's website. MPI's partnership with technology vendor JobTarget only improves it.

"Since implementation, the 'Industry Careers' section of the website has had more than one million job views and is consistently in the top three most visited areas of our site," he says. "JobTarget is the industry's strongest career center platform. They will help us deliver an improved user experience and better job postings."

With more than 800 jobs posted every year and with MPI members receiving access to new postings two weeks in advance of non-members, be sure to check back regularly to find your next move. And if you're looking to hire new employees, Industry Careers provides access to a group of highly qualified meeting professionals.

Go to: www.mpiweb.org/portal/career

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Anatomy of a Live Webcast

By Quinn McMurtry



You have heard the expression – the only certainties in life are death and taxes? If you are a meeting and event planner you might want to add “webcasting” to that old and true adage.

Inevitably, if you are in the meetings and events industry, there will be a time in your not-so-distant-meeting-future, when a client will ask you something that might sound something like this: “Hey, we were discussing the possibility of making the meeting available to our satellite offices? Or, it might be phrased like this: “A lot of our sales reps work from home, and to save money, we were hoping to make this meeting available to them?” And without a doubt, this question will always be followed by the looming question: “How much would that cost?” Seem probable?

Obviously, like any good meeting and event planner, you realize that webcasting is not just a simple request. It’s not like changing the color of the drape or adding additional seating. No. It is much more than just another line item. Webcasting takes logistical planning and a basic technical knowledge of what is required. However, if you are a bit unsure of what is involved for webcasting, here are a few essential “need-to-knows” when a meeting turns into a “hybrid” conference or meeting.

So, when this happens, and it will -- take a deep breath. After all, you are a member of MPI, and you have a roster of qualified suppliers eager to help you. However, before you do anything, you should first understand the difference between a “live webcast” and a “videoconference.”



VIDEOCONFERENCE:

Similar to a webcast, a videoconference provides both audio and video. However, communication is “two-way” between two or more locations. All those participating

in a videoconference can both hear and see each other. In other words, during a videoconference speakers/presenters present, while participants ask real-time questions using computer software and/or a conference phone line. One key distinction is to understand that the amount of live participants during a videoconference is very limited.

Furthermore, special software and hardware are required to fully participate during a videoconference. Although videoconferences are easy to set up, they are generally only useful for a small committee meeting and not capable of communicating with a large audience.

LIVE WEBCAST:

A live webcast is essentially “broadcasting” video and audio over the Internet. Similar to a live broadcast on television, communication is typically one-way only, and broadcasted live to dozens if not thousands of online viewers. So for a large-scale meeting, where you will have a few hundred off-site viewers, webcasting is your only viable option.

A live webcast can be either private or public, but what is important to remember is that viewers typically only require an updated web browser and a computer capable of playing video and audio – special software or hardware is not typically required.



WEBCASTING MINDSET:

So now that you can inform your client about the basic differences between webcasting and videoconferencing, what should your next move be after getting the go-ahead to begin the process of webcasting your meeting or event?

First and foremost, a webcast requires a marketing and promoting mindset. Just adding on the technical components to perform a webcast is a recipe for failure, because a webcast must be promoted, pushed, hyped and re-promoted again. Perhaps much of the reluctance with promoting a webcast is generational, but what is crucial for any planner is this - developing the right promotional/marketing mindset, when it comes to making your event a truly hybrid experience. Accept it, believe in it and then promoted it.

FIND THE RIGHT SUPPLIER:

The next need-to-knows are more technical. They involve bandwidth, encoders and the ever ephemeral – content delivery network also known as the “cloud”. However, instead of troubling yourself with these technical issues, just ask your AV supplier what to do or who to call. Your AV company should have a viable webcasting option available or at the very least, they should be able to make a good recommendation. Just remember, a low-cost option is not your best approach. Think about all the planning involved and if you have gone to all the trouble and expense to make your event available via live webcasting – you will need a supplier that has both the skill and the experience to make your event a success.

DEDICATED BANDWIDTH

The next item is to find out about the venue's Internet options. The proper bandwidth for the Internet connection is your lifeline to the "cloud" and a general rule of thumb is a 5mpg line (upload) is the minimum bandwidth for a robust streaming signal. Furthermore, the Internet line must be a "dedicated" connection and separated from either the hotel's or the location's Internet users. If other users are able to "leech off" the dedicated bandwidth -- your live webcast could be compromised.



ADAPTIVE BIT RATE STREAMING

Because so many people use mobile devices, it is vital that your webcast live stream be capable of an adaptive bit rate. An adaptive bit rate is a streaming technique used to detect the user's bandwidth and helps adapt the multimedia signal to various CPU capacities. For example, if you are viewing on your mobile device or laptop, the ABR will allow for variations in bit rate and CPU capacity so that no matter what device your audience is viewing on, the video and the audio will adapt to help ensure constant live streaming. Video quality is often reduced, but an ABR will provide continuous streaming and convenience. Not adhering to an adaptive bit rate, will limit viewing options for your audience.



LIVE VIDEO OR LIVE VIDEO WITH POWERPOINT:

Most of the conventional webcasting services stream video and audio. This is typical for the majority of webcasting scenarios. However, if you

require a more sophisticated solution, other webcasting options are available that will allow PowerPoint files to be simultaneously displayed in addition to the live video and audio stream. Most of the time, a webcast will only be a "switched" feed that combines live video/audio with switched graphic files via PowerPoint or Keynote. Keep in mind that if your clients are engineers or financial analyst,

much of the detail contained on their slides will most likely appear blurry and unreadable when using a switched feed. On-line viewers could have difficulty interpreting essential graphic details that require more clarity.

SOCIAL MEDIA OPTIONS:

Integrating social media into a live meeting or presentation is a must. Social media allows online audience to more fully participate before during and after any event. From live Twitter feeds, to audience Q&A or streaming directly to a Facebook page, social media integration improves the audience's experience for both the virtual and onsite attendees.



So without getting too technical and boring you with too much jargon, if you learn nothing else from this article, just remember that webcasting takes planning and the proper mindset. And remember that webcasting is just part of the evolutionary process for meetings and events. So holdfast, and embrace the live webcasting potential for your meetings and events – after all, webcasting is inevitable, just like the new adage says.

About the author:



Quinn McMurtry is the Director of Sales & Marketing for MAC Productions AV and currently serving as the V.P. of Communication for MPI of Ohio. Quinn was selected by AV Multimedia Producer Magazine as one of the nation's "Top 30" media content producers for his work on the National Submarine Science Discovery Center's interactive media marketing campaign narrated by Gene Hackman.

Quinn has produced multiple live webcasts, marketing videos and event media for a variety of clients including CINTAS, Toyota, RE/MAX and various organizations. Quinn holds Master of Arts Degree in Film & Video Production from The American University and a Master of Arts in Communication Research from Northern Kentucky University.

Send comments or questions to: qmcmurtry@mac-av.com

Time to Show a Little Love and Appreciation

for those who give their time and talents to MPIOH

This coming June – it's the annual MPI of Ohio Recognition and Appreciation Awards Ceremony

Each year the MPI Ohio Chapter recognizes chapter members who exemplify the finest in the meetings and hospitality industry. These awards officially recognize planners and suppliers who have made significant contributions to the chapter and the industry. Our celebration will be held this year at the Hilton Columbus/Polaris. Join us at the "campfire" by recognizing our member winners in the following categories:

- Supplier of the Year
- Committee of the Year
- Planner of the Year
- Facility of the Year

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Hilton Columbus/Polaris
8700 Lyra Drive, Columbus, OH 43240

5:30 - 6:15pm Registration & Networking

6:15pm - 6:45pm Chapter Announcements & Program

6:45pm - 7:30pm Raffle, Closing Remarks, Networking and S'mores

Land on Target — Lessons on priorities and focus from a professional skydiver and former US Army Ranger David Hart

A gusty westerly wind blows through the midwest on a typical hot and humid summer evening. Invisible bumps in the turbulent air buffet the small four-person single engine aircraft, bouncing me around. Quite fittingly, we are flying over downtown Dayton, Ohio, the birthplace of the Wright Brothers, fathers of flight. The vast majority of the population in the small metropolitan city goes about their daily activities oblivious to our plans. The pilot sits in the only seat in the aircraft, expertly orbiting the plane several thousand feet over my target, a minor league baseball stadium. The overhead wing knives through the air, skimming just feet below a low grey ceiling of clouds. This is the pilot's first time flying a skydiver and he appears to be a little nervous. Who would blame him? In a few minutes the side door of his aircraft will open in flight, and his only passenger, a professional demonstration jumper, will leap from his door over many blocks of 20 and 30-story office buildings. The goal is for me to fly my parachute into the stadium with a game ball in my pocket and a US Flag in tow.



Roughly an hour earlier, I stood at a small county airport, observing the pilot's methodical pre-flight inspection of the airframe. While he was doing that, I was checking to ensure I had all my necessary equipment for my pending parachute performance. He was certainly very thorough going over the airplane; good habits he probably formed in his current role as a flight instructor and reassuring to me as the sole passenger. He points out a few minor maintenance issues that he thinks should receive some attention in the near future. Nothing, he says, that will prevent a safe flight on our short mission. The pilot smiles a lot, seeming confident, positive and relaxed. I know very little about airplanes and find his overall attitude reassuring. On jobs like this, situations can develop and get stressful very quickly. It is always more enjoyable for me to work with a pleasant and professional pilot.

We both load up inside the cramped little space of the airplane and taxi out to the runway for take-off. Waiting at the beginning of the runway, the pilot holds the plane still with the brakes and revs the tiny four cylinder engine to maximum power. This well maintained twenty five year old airframe has many loose rivets and parts that rattle and shake. This clamorous symphony of vibrating metal parts adds to the anticipation of our take off. The pilot releases the brakes and we immediately pick up speed, but slowly and not anything remotely resembling the strong smooth push back into your seat of a large commercial jet. I mentally encourage the plane go faster and fly. I silently hope the pilot is more confident than I am that this extremely noisy little airplane will take off. The plane increases its pace on a skyward quest to free itself from the grip of planet earth. Eventually we lift off the bumpy asphalt, the ride instantly becoming smoother; it becomes obvious we are flying. Incredible, I always marvel that airplanes can fly. Way to go Wilbur and Orville Wright.

Intimidating Goals

We reach our destination after a short 10 minute flight. The pilot communicates through a headset that looks a lot like my mom's winter earmuffs, only coated in plastic. He continuously communicates with the local air traffic controllers to keep them apprised of our status and to accept any commands to adjust our flight plan to accommodate other air traffic in the area. Alternating his radio frequency, he attempts to reach my team-mate with the ground crew team to ensure the exact timing of my performance. The ground crew leader is a young 19 year old man. To most people this might seem overly young to be involved in an intense skydiving performance, but he's smart and has a couple years of experience. I don't worry about him making good decisions. It's reassuring to have someone you trust coordinating with the people on the ground. At times a client can apply a great deal of pressure in a "the show must go on mentality." This doesn't always translate into safe skydiving conditions for the jumper. The ground crew leader has to have the maturity to stand up and say no, when no is the safest thing to say. This person would do that. I take some comfort in this.

Keep Your Eye On The Ball

Crouching to get a better view of the intended landing area, I peer out the side window. My knees have a light ache from the steel floor.

Any unnecessary weight, including wall and floor padding, has been removed from the airframe to permit the little aircraft to fly more efficiently. I ignore the growing numbness in my legs that is compounded by the weight and discomfort of my parachute equipment, including a 400-square foot American flag strapped to my stomach in a small pouch. I plan to deploy and land with the Stars and Stripes once I get out of the airplane; something else to think about.

In spite of our close proximity to each other, I feel mostly separate from the pilot; alone to reflect on what I'm about to do. The panoramic view below is beautiful and intimidating at the same time. Savoring the moment, I look out over the city, past the imposing river that cuts a wide swath through the urban landscape. Perfectly straight roads, paved by an engineer with a plan, spoke out, and at many points, bridge over the snaking river. Each long black asphalt line is sandwiched by short squat buildings and homes. This vista goes on and on as far as the eye can see. The bright green ballpark appears as an emerald gem, the grass of the outfield cut in a pretty crisscross pattern I can see from the air. This diamond-in-the-rough is surrounded by tall buildings that cast long, dark shadows. Each structure is a potential obstacle that reaches up hundreds of feet and dares me to jump into a forest of concrete and steel.

At times the wind blows strong. I can feel the airspeed slow down each time the pilot points the winged aluminum vessel west into the wind. It's very important that I exit the airplane far enough up wind from the ballpark to ensure I can land my parachute inside the stadium. If I choose the wrong place to exit, I have little hope of landing in an attractive area. I quiet my nerves and take confidence in my 23 years of parachuting experience. Not allowing my mind to focus on the potential negative outcomes and obstacles is paramount, so I work to keep myself focused on my goal. I consider the immediate steps ahead of me and remind the pilot, for the second time, to provide me with a nice long jump run that takes an east to west flight path facing into the wind and directly over the ballpark. He smiles and nods his head confirming the final instruction.

Make Adjustments

Hoping to verify the status of our performance and the current wind conditions, I tap the pilot on the shoulder. He has a hard time hearing me over all the noise and through the headset, so I am practically screaming at him. He pulls the small hands free microphone in front of his mouth and attempts to reach the ground crew with the aircraft radio. He receives no response...who knows why...maybe their radio isn't working. As the plane continues to bounce around in the sometimes turbulent air and circle the landing zone, I wonder if the jump has been delayed or called off. Before I have to give this further consideration, orange smoke, which is the alternate non-verbal "go" signal, begins to stream across the green grass. The jump is on. My ground crew is right on cue.

For whatever reason, the pilot ignores my previous instructions and approaches the ballpark from the south. I'm going to have to do something about that if I want to get out of the plane upwind, but first I need to open the door so I can get a good view looking down.

I rotate a small metal handle about the size of a coffee mug grip freeing the door latch. I release the door handle causing the specially modified airplane door to swing up and out into the stiff prop blast of the airplane propeller. With the door open, the 90 MPH wind thunders inside the airplane and noticeably cools off the interior, the change in temperature actually feels good.

It's all very exhilarating and I enjoy the moment. This is a unique feeling I can only describe as magical. I look down at the ballpark and realize I can cover the entire stadium with the very end of my pinky finger. Wow! There sure are a lot of buildings and light poles down there. I remember this city powers their public transportation buses with a suspended spider web of highly charged electrical cables. Should I select the wrong spot to exit the airplane, this really limits my alternate landing options. Nearly 10,000 baseball fans, reporters and photographers look up in anticipation of the coming performance. All this adds to the pressure to land in the stadium and nowhere else. I savor the challenge.

This is the first moment that I miss having a teammate with me. Like a best friend in grade school, it feels better having someone you trust looking out for you. Check, recheck, triple check, you can't check your equipment enough. This has been an ingrained habit for decades, you just can't check enough. I don't want any of my equipment inadvertently coming open while I am climbing out of the airplane. This could have drastic consequences for both the pilot and me. I check my gear one last time to ensure everything is as it should be. The plane is flying 3,500 feet directly above the ballpark. I need to have the pilot bank his plane 90 degrees to the left and fly into the westerly wind. Pointing my fingers left or right, I provide him with hand signals to change his flight path. Initially, his corrections are not enough, but with more instructions he finally makes a big enough adjustment and flies into the bright orange setting sun. This is going to work out perfectly.

Take the Leap

The clouds are breaking up and providing a beautiful backdrop for the jump, casting shades of orange, yellow, blue and gray onto the bottoms of the dispersing clouds. I wave one last goodbye, but the pilot is no longer willing to acknowledge my presence. He seems intensely focused on the front windshield of the airplane, as if his life depends on it, but it doesn't. I grasp both sides of the door frame and force my feet out onto a landing wheel. Fighting the heavy blast of wind that wants to peel away my grip, I climb out onto the airplane wing strut. I smile and laugh to myself at the absurdity of the situation. Here am I on the outside of a flying airplane, waving at a pilot who is ignoring me, all over a sea of concrete. I'm 42, married with three little kids, living in a typical sprawling suburban middle-class neighborhood. Not for a million dollars would my neighbors ever put themselves in a situation like this. The irony strikes my funny bone.

Roughly a half mile upwind from the ballpark, I release my hands from the wing strut, step off the landing gear and quickly accelerate to terminal velocity. It is a beautiful and surreal feeling I've enjoyed thousands of times. I take my mind off anything else and focus on deploying my parachute, which I do, about five seconds after I

leave the plane. My gravity-induced free-fall comes to an end as my parachute expands like a gorgeous lifesaving inflatable raft. I relax in the parachute harness, now 2,500 feet over the city. My parachute is flying upwind in a perfect position to fly down the wind line and land in the stadium.

The powerful, brilliant white stadium lights come on as the evening reaches twilight. The landing area stills looks small, but my confidence is high. I release the American Flag from the belly bag. As the flag unfurls, the five pound bag of lead performs its intended purpose, reaching the lowest point it tugs on my harness, pulling the leading edge of the flag straight as if attached to a pole. The flag snaps as it flies underneath me. I can see the ground crew leader standing on the grass in left field with some local army recruits who have volunteered to help gather up the Stars and Stripes after I land.

Navigating Obstacles

Feeling the wind pushing on my parachute, looking at the small flags blowing on top of the stadium roof and reading the orange ground smoke as it blows across the outfield, I plan my initial landing approach into the ballpark. Most of the park is surrounded by the stadium super-structure. It catches the wind causing it to cascade over the roof like invisible ocean waves breaking on a reef and swirling down into the ballpark. Left field by the ground crew is my target; I glide between the stadium lights in right field and sail past the scoreboard in center. As the air buffets the square ram-air nylon parachute my mind is constantly calculating and processing new information.

As I work to control my breathing and focus, I'm reminded of my marksmanship training as an Army Ranger. There is the need to control my distractions and anxiety; to focus on the imaginary target I want to hit. My mind constantly makes flight path calculations as gravity continues to pull me earthward. I respond accordingly with input to the parachute steering toggles. The entire process is completely intuitive; much like tossing a paper wad into a garbage can. Your mind calls upon your past experience and analyzes the current conditions to instruct your body to provide steering input.

I can hear the roar and whistles of the crowd as I descend into the ballpark. A group of dignitaries huddles outside the visitors dug-out by third base, waiting for me to land. Feeling this is the best direction to land; I pull down on the left steering toggle and pivot the canopy to face down the third base line. Ideally I want to land into the wind, but the ground smoke swirls and radically changes directions from one moment to the next, making it nearly impossible to predict a consistent wind direction. With the wind being so shifty and unpredictable, I focus intensely on a good landing, ready to anticipate and respond to the changing conditions. The ground rises up to meet me and I begin my landing flare, pulling down on both steering toggles simultaneously. Hanging underneath me, the flag reaches the ground first. Next my feet softly touchdown and I stumble to my knees. I'm annoyed with myself for falling down in front of so many people. I stand up and bend at the waist, bowing like

a Broadway star. Hearing the crowd clap and roar with laughter, I immediately feel better.

As I detach the flag for the recruits to gather up, I reach down into my leg pocket and pull out the game ball. I stride towards third base with the baseball held high, the fans yell and applaud once again. I hand the ball over to the opening pitch dignitary. He gives me a funny look that says, "Thanks for the ball, but I can't believe you're crazy enough to do what you just did." Another magical moment...the manicured green grass, the boisterous fans, the dignitaries, reporters snapping photos; all the attention is overwhelming. I trot off the field with the ground crew feeling blessed to have this type of experience.

Reflections

Consider this: What are you focusing on? Assuming we get what we focus on; are you focusing more on what you want or what you don't want? It's so easy for us to obsess over negative people, challenges and events that we have no control over. This takes energy and resources away from our efforts to achieve our most important goals. Ask yourself how many major things you can focus on at one time and still hope to land on target? Consider how many major initiatives you are focused on right now. Too many and you risk diluting your efforts. Like skydiving into a ballpark, we must focus on our landing target and limit our distractions. How can you prioritize better and increase your focus to be more effective?

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Creating MAGIC in Life and Business

By Star Staubach

If you were to have access to a magic wand, a Genie in a bottle, a miracle, what would you ask for? Does the answer to that question come easily?

And yet, simply answering that question can provide you with powerful solutions in the business world and in your personal life. Are you ready for this kind of experience?



Five Simple Steps to Creating MAGIC in Life and Business:

M - Mindset

The key to changing your mindset is first becoming aware of it. What is the chatter that fills your thoughts? What is the dialogue when you're being challenged by a new opportunity? Are you riddled with self-doubt, fear, thoughts of not being good enough? Are you excited, motivated and by the challenge, opportunity and possibility?

Mindset matters. What you tell yourself, the message you repeat to yourself, will impact your choices.

A - Ask

There is something that you'd like to accomplish or experience and it requires you making a request of someone else. Is it a promotion, proposal or a support? Notice the dialogue activated when you consider speaking up and simply asking.

Challenge yourself to push beyond the discomfort and simply ask. The ASK is powerful.

You're not asking with a demand, instead you're giving someone else the opportunity to support you in your goals. You will be surprised by this simple and powerful exercise.

What are you ready to ask for?

G - Give Up

Everyone has something that they could benefit from giving up. The easiest place to start this practice is in the way of giving up clutter; in the office, your closet, your kitchen counter. Give up the items you no longer need. Give up habits, relationships, and old stories. Releasing creates an opportunity for you to experience something new.

I - Intuitive Wisdom

Research from the Heart Math Institute indicates that your heart can predict events before your brain. Your heart has an unparalleled intuitive wisdom. And yet, this is perhaps one of the most under utilized resources humans have. Humans are one of the only species who will sense danger and proceed, despite their instincts.

Take time to honor your intuitive wisdom. Practice honoring your intuition by noticing subtle "gut instincts". Give yourself permission to deviate from the normal routine, listen to the quiet voice within, asking you to go for a walk, call the friend who crosses your mind or speak about an issue that keeps recurring in your mind.

C - Create with Intention

The quickest way to experiencing MAGIC in your life is to spend time creating with intention. Ask yourself, what is it that I you are seeking from the desired goal. Think about the outcome, the feeling attached to that outcome and the ultimate result you are working toward. Allow your clear intention to guide action steps, choices and the feelings you experience along the way.

What will you apply this MAGIC formula to? What will you create with this simple, yet powerful system?

Want to add to your MAGICAL experience? Visit IgniteRadiance.com to register for Star's free video series, Radiant Receiving™.



Star Staubach is the founder of Ignite Radiance, Radio show host, International Motivational Speaker who thrives on creating magic in the lives of busy professionals as they create transformative change in their lives, discover hidden talent and awaken dormant Soul desires.

Staubach has been honored by the state of Kentucky for her contribution to small business and the local economy and has shared the stage with World Thought Leaders such as Panache Desai, as seen on Oprah Winfrey's Supersoul Sunday.

MPI Scholarship Opportunities Await Your Application!

MPI Ohio Chapter offers a variety of scholarships to aide in continuing your involvement and education in the meeting planning industry. Scholarships are awarded throughout the fiscal year (July 1- June 30) in the following categories:

- *CMP/CMM Certification*
- *Membership Assistance*
- *Educational Opportunities*
- *WEC*
- *Mid America Conference (MAC)*

Scholarship applications should be completed and submitted to the chapter administrator (admin@mpioh.org). Email admin@mpioh.org for an application or download one from our website, www.mpioh.org.

Scholarships are awarded based on the following criteria:

- *MPI Ohio Chapter Membership status*
- *Involvement with MPI Ohio Chapter*
- *Committee participation*
- *Member recruitment*
- *Attendance at meetings and special events*
- *Submission of articles for DEFINE*
- *Study Group Facilitation*
- *Previous scholarships received from MPI Ohio Chapter*

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Safety Tip Spotlight: Caution Duct Tape

About: Believe it or not – duct tape could save your life, and at the very least, prevent a bad accident. You can call this an AV tip or “safety tip”, but if you have an edge of step or a line of cords taped down – it is always recommended that you make sure that there is a visible strip of black and yellow caution tape.

Cost: \$10.00

Where: www.Staples.com



App Spotlight: World Clock Meeting Planner

About: If you're constantly trying to schedule meetings across different time zones, this World Clock Meeting Planner is the perfect tool. You can add up to 12 different cities around the world; it will help you find the most convenient meeting time for all parties involved.

If you already know the local time of a meeting but want to quickly determine the corresponding times in different time zones, use the Event Time Announcer to convert and share the meeting with everyone involved.

Cost: \$2.99 from Apple Store

Where: www.timeanddate.com/iphone/meetingplanner.html



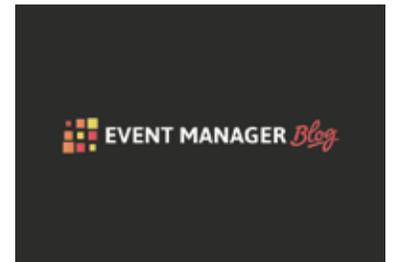
Blog Spotlight: EMBLOG

About: The leader in Event Technology Trends, this is a great resource for seasoned and start-up event planners. The blog has been widely referenced. It tops all the rankings in its category and it has become a point of reference for the event industry when it gets to innovation, inspiration and innovative technology.

Event Manger Blog quickly became the most talked about blog about Event Technology Trends, Innovative Event Concepts and Social Media applied to the Event Industry. Thousands of event professionals from around the globe read EMBLog daily.

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Where: www.eventmanagerblog.com



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They say learn something new everyday. There’s no easier way than participating in our MPIOH group on Linked In. You may even teach your peers a thing or two!

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