



MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

# DEFINE

MPI  
OHIO CHAPTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL OHIO CHAPTER

**OCT — DEC 2017**



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Pictured: MPIOH 2017 Auction benefiting Out of Darkness

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## The Official Newsletter of MPI Ohio Chapter

Define is the official publication of the Ohio Chapter of Meeting Professionals International. It is published every other month as a benefit of membership and circulated free of charge to MPIOH members.

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Open

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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.

### MPIOH Executive Office

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# President's Column

Amanda Stredney  
Account Executive, Marriott International



## Congratulations MPI Ohio!

We received some exciting news this past month from MPI Global recognizing MPI Ohio as a Top Performing Chapter from this previous year!

As some of you may know, each year, the MPI chapters are measured by achievement of specific metric goals. A Top Performing Chapter is a chapter that achieves 4-out-of-5 metric goals. Those include our percentage of members who are engaged and volunteer on committees, our satisfaction scores with regards to our chapter leadership and educational content, our conversion of non-members to members, our overall financial health, and our overall total membership number. As volunteers ourselves, it's humbling to see that our business decisions as meeting professionals are impacting our chapter so much that we would be recognized globally! Way to go MPI Ohio!

In the first few months of my presidency, I've learned how vital it is to have the support of your membership and also your board. I do hope you continue to engage yourselves and have a voice through our chapter and also know that you, as members, are supported! There is a saying by Henry Ford that I love and have found to be rather true: "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." Please ask as many questions as you want to learn the "Ins and Outs" of our chapter.

Speaking of questions, guess what?! We have exciting events coming up!

- We've upgraded the REACH program and are now offering the morning sessions rather than the luncheon, all based on your feedback. I promise you REACH is a huge member benefit! You have the opportunity to share best practices with your peers at a roundtable discussion, and you can also earn CE credits! Please notice that the locations of our REACH meetings are different than our chapter meetings – this is on purpose!
- In December, we have our In-depth Education Day! Gear up and get ready for some major takeaways from the amazing speakers – December 13th at the Embassy Suites in Dublin.
- And don't forget about our CMP Program! If you're interested in advancing your career, talk to Adriane Cesa about getting your certification. We've got a great program in place and we want to be sure our members take advantage of it.

As I'm sure you all know, our world has been hit with tragedy in the last few months, both from Mother Nature and other factors unknown. Each of these events has majorly impacted the meetings & events industry from hoteliers to independent business travelers to meetings occurring during these tragic moments. It's imperative for us all to keep our priorities in line. Take time for your family, friends and those you hold dear. And most importantly, take time for yourself. Happy Fall!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda Stredney". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Amanda Stredney

# Confessions from an IMEX Newbie

By Ashley Lawson



This year marked my first time as a Hosted Buyer at IMEX, a worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings, and events that is held each October in Las Vegas. I was very lucky to receive the in-demand invite from our partners at Caesars Entertainment. And I'm so grateful I did. From the moment they extended the invite, I received the royal treatment from the luxury meeting and entertainment company.

As a newbie to the industry, I didn't quite know what to expect for the conference. But I quickly learned that events planned for meeting planners aim to exceed all expectations. And as such, IMEX was filled with awe-inspiring surprises, on-time events, and drinks that

flowed as naturally as the unbounding energy.

Each day I entered the conference, I would scan in my badge and walk into the world. Every country, state, city, CVB, hotel and DMC on the planet was represented inside one room. Animated conversations in Spanish, French, Japanese, and Dutch were heard at every turn. Irish sorcerers, lei-making Hawaiians, Argentinian tango dancers and even the hobbit feet from New Zealand's Lord of the Rings movie set, freely roamed the aisles.

After absorbing the daily excitement, I would rotate through quick-fire meetings to learn about new hotel properties, global cultural events, and the growing meetings industry trends. While the days were a bit daunting, racing from one meeting to the next, I found the nights to be the perfect time to build friendships out of my newfound business relationships. Thanks to Caesars, I spent my evenings eating endless pasta at Giada's, and attending incredible events like SITE Night and "Rendezvous," which was sponsored by both MPI Foundation and Caesars Entertainment. SITE Night was an enchanted evening miraculously combining acrobatic creatures with boozy bowling and Rendezvous was the knock-out finale event, where everyone came together to dance under the stars at Drai's Nightclub.



Through this experience, I've learned that IMEX is an absolute must for meeting planners. It is a fun, high-energy, fast-paced conference that is essentially the United Nations of meetings & incentives. In a few short days, I developed new partners from every corner of the globe, in one convenient place. Most importantly, I became a much more knowledgeable and valuable resource for my clients. Thanks to the learning seminars and endless introductions, my planning tool belt is full of new destination, event, and venue ideas for our future incentive trips.

## My experience at IMEX was so fantastic that I wanted to share my Top 10 Lessons Learned:

1. Find yourself a new friend at Caesars Entertainment. Trust me, the Caesars IMEX experience is a first-class, jam-packed whirlwind you won't want to miss.
2. Respect the fact that you're being hosted. Book your meetings in advance and be intentional about where you can create business partnerships.
3. Be a YES person. There are endless invites to booth happy hours, parties, dinners, and shows. Make the most of your time and say "yes" to as many events as you can.

4. Wear the comfiest shoes you can find. The Sands Expo is the size of 34 football fields. So seriously – find shoes that make you feel like you’re walking on clouds because you never stop running from meeting to meeting.
5. Visit the MPI booth. The association is always running membership promotions and great giveaways like complimentary professional photo sessions. Plus, they like to see their valued members!
6. Hydrate often. Between constant conversations, hustling to meetings, and let’s be honest – the late-night parties, you’ll want every ounce of H2O you can get.
7. Write notes on the business cards you receive and follow up with everyone you meet. You’re going to meet a lot of people so mental notes will easily be lost. The whole world is under one roof so take advantage of the opportunity to build long-standing industry relationships.
8. Make time for a ride on the High Roller and then book it for a group. This observation wheel (across from Caesars Palace) is a must do for your next Vegas trip. The view is amazing!
9. If you can, take Friday off. You’ll need it to recuperate from both Vegas and from many days of speed-networking.
10. Put the 2018 IMEX on your schedule, right now. October 16-18, 2018 is already marked on my calendar and I hope to see you there!

Ashley Lawson

#### Achieve Incentives & Meetings

Ashley recently joined the MPI OH Chapter after moving to Cleveland from Washington, DC, where she worked with Fortune 500 companies to build out their corporate social responsibility initiatives.



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# HELP YOURSELF

## WHAT ARE SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DOING?

By Andrea Michaels

I reviewed general tips and advice I have garnered from successful people who are great at doing business. Now I'd like to get a bit more specific about trends in all aspects of our business world. They might apply to meetings and events, but in general they apply to advertising, public relations, and sales of every kind. They are what we need to keep watch on, now, and into the future. Read this today, and by tomorrow there will be a few new ones. I promise to try to keep on top of them and share.

### 1. Change your terminology.

- You no longer have “clients;” you no longer have “guests;” you no longer have “attendees” ... you have PARTICIPANTS. This changes the mind set on everything you think about and plan, because now you are offering to engage them in an experience.

### 2. Demographics are being replaced by psychographics, or “what do you like,” not what is your age and where are you from.

### 3. Look closely at Generation Z, those 19 and under ... they are the participants of the future and should guide what you are doing now.

- Mike Dominguez, VP of MGM Mirage, shared with me that they are building a new arena where the entire second tier will be General Admission for people to buy tickets but not buy seats. They will stand and be a part of the experience of the concert ... an entirely new way of thinking.

### 4. Examine what the Music Festival Experience is all about:

- People meet others they would never normally encounter.
- They use the power of music as a unique tool to aid the human experience.
- Adding this to a social gathering is an unparalleled force.
- Festivals are a uniting experience; people synch with each other; In other words, they connect.
- The use of social media at events, once known for mosh pits, morphed into hyper-connected webs of social interaction.
- Think of the possibilities:
  - Geo tagging allows users to drop a pin on their tent so participants won't get lost;
  - Austin City Limits programmed RFID bracelets with credit card information so no one had to pull out cash or cards to pay for drinks; for organizers all the data needed is provided, even line control, because they can see a back-up before it happens;
  - At the Sapphire Conference, use of I-Beacons and Wi-Fi heat mapping to improve the participants' experience allowed data to be monitored in real time but analyzed later. It provided how people moved, what attracted the crowds, where they stay the longest. And the data can be broken down into patterns by industry and job title.

### 5. It is still the day of “The Sharing Economy.”

- We have no more secrets.
- We share ideas.
- Crowdsourcing and crowdfunding are becoming a norm.
- It's about groups and togetherness... nothing attracts a crowd like a crowd; just look at the popularity of flash mobs.
- In the words of my friend, Colja Dams, President and CEO of Vok Dams, this is an era of word-of-mouth in 3-D.
- One Spark is a great example of a Crowdfunding Festival in Jacksonville, Florida. It proves that face-to-face connections are critical to start-up projects. The idea is that great ideas can come from anywhere; it cuts through the digital noise and allows people to connect and truly engage and get real-time feedback. Ideas are presented on multiple stages; participants cast votes at kiosks or on an event app, and significant monies are given to creators in proportion to total votes cast; it empowers the crowd to make the decisions.

A lot to absorb, right? I'm going to give you some time to mull over all of these and watch for the next article which will continue this conversation. I invite you to participate with your own “trends.” Let's get the dialogue moving!

Andrea Michaels is founder and president of Extraordinary Events, a multi-award-winning international event agency based in Los Angeles. Andrea is the author of *Reflections of a Successful Wallflower: Lessons in Business; Lessons in Life* and an in-demand speaker and leading voice in the special events industry. She may be reached via [amichaels@extraordinaryevents.net](mailto:amichaels@extraordinaryevents.net).

# The Meeting Community:

## How Meetings Truly Help

By Angela Hofford



In your lifetime, I'm sure you have identified with many social groups for reasons like education, personal and professional development, networking, and friendships. Having recently relocated to Ohio and working remotely from home, I missed interacting and contributing with my industry peers. And so, because of this, I joined MPI Ohio with an earnest desire to discover and build the community support I was lacking.

A sense of community is perhaps one of the most important components of a worthwhile life. It's what brings us together in celebration and, unfortunately, also in the face of tragedy. Now, more than ever, our industry is focused on crisis and risk management for our events and our attendees. Of course, we can't control natural disasters. We can't put a stop to all of the violence in the world. However, when peers come together in light of a recent disaster or tragedy, we're able to show others what community is all about—to remain resilient, positive, and supportive to

our peers and for our clients.

Sometimes, assistance and support from MPI is organized annually for the benefit of our community. For example, Chapters like MPI Ohio, MPI South Florida, MPI Washington State and many more honor the contributions of past members through memorial scholarship programs. Education support provides a meaningful way to honor members who made a big impact in our industry, carrying on a legacy to future generations of our community.

Other times, assistance is spontaneous, which can also promote an incredibly rewarding sense of connection. A small act, when multiplied throughout our industry, can impact many on a much larger scale. In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, a member of MPI Arizona requested donations and volunteered to drive them to Texas, working closely with the Houston Police Department to ensure appropriate distribution. The call to action expanded quickly and resulted in members from MPI, SITE, HSMIA, ILEA and others donating

10,000 towels, toiletries, 8,000 sets of sheets, pet food, and more than 900 cases (over 20,000 bottles) of water! Contributions came from every facet of our industry. The result not only assisted individuals and families affected by the storms, but it also supported MPI's mission of connecting the meeting and event industry together.

When we shed individualist behavior and embrace a thoughtful way to connect with our peers, we become empowered to contribute to a healthy and happy world. I think that's what draws so many of us to MPI — you become part of something more. You become more engaged in social issues and how we can help. You become more driven for personal and professional growth. You become more invested in the strength of our global community. You realize, as a member of MPI, that you are more than just one person—even if you find yourself in an unfamiliar state or working remote from your house, too.

Check out our website at:  
**[www.mpioh.org](http://www.mpioh.org)**

- Better calendar for chapter events
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# Mark Your Calendar!

**DECEMBER 13, 2017**  
**CHAPTER MEETING**

In-Depth Education Day  
Embassy Suites Dublin  
Columbus, OH

**FEBRUARY 25-27, 2018**  
**MIDAMERICA CONFERENCE (MAC)**

Hyatt Regency Hotel Columbus  
Columbus, OH

**MARCH 14, 2018**  
**CHAPTER MEETING**

Unlocking the Secrets to Why  
Hotels are Rejecting My Business  
Brett Sterenson  
Cincinnati, OH



**MARCH 21, 2018**  
**REACH WORKSHOP**

Best Practice Roundtable Discussions with Industry Peers  
Cleveland, OH

**APRIL 18, 2018**  
**CHAPTER MEETING**

Le Meridien, The Joseph  
Columbus, OH

**MAY 16, 2018**  
**CHAPTER MEETING**

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame  
Cleveland, OH

**MEETING ATTENDANCE POLICY:** All Essential Level members or non-members are limited to no more than two events in one fiscal year and must pay the Essential Level/Non-member rate. MPI Preferred or Premier Level members are welcome to attend all chapter events at the Member Price.

## Host the Next MPIOH Chapter Meeting!

Spotlight your hotel, property or meeting space by sponsoring an MPIOH Chapter luncheon! In addition to gaining immediate exposure to meeting professionals attending the event, your hotel will receive exposure to MPIOH Chapter members and non-members throughout Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Indiana with over \$1,600 of sponsorship advertising.

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# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

*Let's all give an #MPIOH welcome to a few of our newest MPI Ohio members. We are excited that you have become a part of our organization and look forward to helping you grow and reach your goals.*

*Here's some information about each of them – and if you get a chance introduce yourself the next time you see them!*



**TRACEY ADAMS**  
**LIVE TECHNOLOGIES LLC**

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 614-358-3960

**WHO ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?** My daughter Maggie and my husband Chris

**WHO DO YOU WORK FOR AND WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?** Live Technologies, LLC. I am an Account Executive/Event Meeting Planner

**HOW DID YOU GET TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY IN YOUR CAREER?** Patience! I started in the Group Travel Business and moved into Corporate Meeting and Incentive Planning

**WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?** Working with clients to help them see their events come to life

**WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST MOMENT?** Motherhood

**WHAT ARE THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS YOU USE AT WORK?** Consulting, planning, and organization

**WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE BEGINNING THEIR CAREER IN THE MEETING INDUSTRY?** Join MPI and other related groups to enhance your knowledge of the overall industry. Do not focus on one particular area, but make yourself marketable by experiencing the many diverse opportunities there are in this business.

**WHAT SUPER-POWER WOULD YOU LOVE TO HAVE TO HELP YOU DO YOUR JOB BETTER?** Ability to be in multiple places at one time!



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**WHO ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?** My daughter Sophia, my butcher, and the sales team I am currently working with at the Renaissance

**WHO DO YOU WORK FOR AND WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?** Currently opening the brand new Renaissance Toledo Downtown Hotel with First Hospitality Group. I am the Business Sales Manager, I also cover the Sports and Entertainment Market.

**WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?** Changing people's perception of Toledo and what this area has to offer people to enjoy.

**WHAT ARE THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS YOU USE AT WORK?** Listening to understand, understanding the client's needs before offering solutions, and a sense of humor

**WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE BEGINNING THEIR CAREER IN THE MEETING INDUSTRY?** Make your handshake mean something. Never promise anything you cannot deliver, and constantly strive to deliver more than you promise.

**WHAT SUPER-POWER WOULD YOU LOVE TO HAVE TO HELP YOU DO YOUR JOB BETTER?** The ability to speak and understand all languages



**MELANIE MASON**  
**OWENS CORNING AND HINES**

704-886-8338  
Melanie.mason35@gmail.com

**WHO ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?** My Dad and Ms. Jen, and my dog, Rudy

**WHO DO YOU WORK FOR AND WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?** Owens Corning and Hines, my job title is Conference Service Manager

**WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?** No day is the same and that there is always something to keep me busy.

**WHAT ARE THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS YOU USE AT WORK?** Organization, time management, and the ability to multi-task.

**WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE BEGINNING THEIR CAREER IN THE MEETING INDUSTRY?** Work hard, no matter what.

**WHAT SUPER-POWER WOULD YOU LOVE TO HAVE TO HELP YOU DO YOUR JOB BETTER?** The ability to read someone's mind would significantly help me to understand what the guest really wants

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Pinterest: [www.pinterest.com/melaniemason35/](http://www.pinterest.com/melaniemason35/)  
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**OLIVIA PELZER**  
**CARDINAL HEALTH**

Olivia.pelzer@cardinalhealth.com or find me on LinkedIn. I also manage the Instagram for our chapter so follow "mpioh" on Instagram!

**WHO ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?** My husband, my family and my two kitties – Kenny & Pib!

**WHO DO YOU WORK FOR AND WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?** I work for Cardinal Health as a meeting planner. My primary responsibility is planning our annual customer conference and tradeshow with 8,000 attendees. I also plan a variety of other meetings throughout the year, and manage our strategic meetings program through Cvent.

**WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?** The best thing about my job being on-site at a meeting (usually by the last day). I enjoy seeing all my work be put into action and result in a successful conference or meeting.

**WHAT ARE THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS YOU USE AT WORK?** Multi-tasking, adapting easily to change, and staying organized.

**WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE BEGINNING THEIR CAREER IN THE MEETING INDUSTRY?** I would advise them to watch and listen to your peers and everything around you. In my short career, I've learned the most from my co-workers and their different planning styles. This has helped me shape my own planning techniques and know how to confidently handle any situation I'm given.

**WHAT SUPER-POWER WOULD YOU LOVE TO HAVE TO HELP YOU DO YOUR JOB BETTER?** For sure cloning. I have a hard time teaching other people so if I could just have another version of me, I would get so much done.



**CINDY SIMONELLI**  
**RADISSON HOTEL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO**

419-324-1783  
cindy.simonelli@radisson.com

**WHO ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?** My family and friends

**WHO DO YOU WORK FOR AND WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?** Radisson Hotel at the University of Toledo as the Director of Sales and Marketing

**WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?** Meeting new people every day and working with a great group of individuals!

**WHAT ARE THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS YOU USE AT WORK?** Giving great customer service, the ability to multitask, and having a lot of patience

**WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE BEGINNING THEIR CAREER IN THE MEETING INDUSTRY?** Building a great rapport with both your customers and team members will give you an opportunity to develop a stronger customer retention base.

**WHAT SUPER-POWER WOULD YOU LOVE TO HAVE TO HELP YOU DO YOUR JOB BETTER?** The ability to clone myself would be great so I can produce twice as much.

For your next:  
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