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INSIDE

9

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TABLE OF CONTENTS departments

- 5 **President's Message**
New Year's Resolutions:
Taking Action to Build Successful Partnerships!
By Nancey Hernandez, CMP
- 6 **Mark Your Calendar**
Upcoming chapter events you won't want to miss!
- 7 **Thoughts from the Editor**
If Everyone Lived Like Me, We Would Need 4.2 Planets
By Jennifer Fortman
- 8 **City Talk**
Upcoming Developments: City of Plano
- 16 **New Members**
- 17 **Member Spotlight**
Spotlight on Eddie Hill of Team Up, Inc.
- 18 **Off the Vine**
The latest trends in food and beverage.
This issue: Ultimate Cuisine by Chef Tom
By Matthew Massengale, DMCP, CMP
- 19 **Cocktails, Couture and Canapés**
New Year's Eve Resolutions and Traditions

features

- 9 **Trends in Entertainment**
More and more entertainment buyers are looking for something different to highlight or create buzz about their event.
By O.D. O'Donnell
- 10 **Reinventing Inventory**
Planners and designers are saving by reusing and redesigning props.
By Lindsey Getz
- 13 **The Changing Face of Meetings**
Welcome to the new world of the meetings industry. Are you going to evolve with it or be left behind?
By Mark Hubrich
- 15 **The Meeting Professional's Dilemma: A Play in Three Acts**
Part III: Building a relationship with your meetings and event producer is the key to a successful partnership.
By Melissa Mihelich, Zoom.7 Inc.
- 20 **Building Member Loyalty**
Gain solid supporters for years to come by showing members you appreciate what they need, want and expect.
By Robert Sanchez, CMP

January/February 2008



page 9



page 18



page 19

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I am CMP

Robert Sanchez, CMP
Doral Tesoro Hotel & Golf Club
Ft. Worth, Texas



**I booked more than
\$2 million in revenue
last year, but never
missed my daughter's
swim class.**

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**DALLAS/FORT WORTH
CHAPTER**


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New Year's Resolutions: Taking Action to Build Successful Partnerships!



By Nancey Hernandez, CMP
Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau



**Taking action can
also mean honoring
those who support
our chapter and
take our events to
the next level.**

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a very festive holiday season, and I look forward to sharing a prosperous 2008 with each of you! On behalf of the Board of Directors and Leadership of the MPI D/FW Chapter, I want to thank all of our members for creating such a successful community.

For many of us, "New Year" means "new goals." Think about your goals for 2008. Much of the time, making personal goals means a call to ACTION – making changes in your life to lose weight, gain a promotion, increase physical activity or spend more time with your family.

As you review your aspirations for the New Year, I urge you to take ACTION within our Chapter. Get involved and participate. You may think this always means, "Volunteer hours of your time serving on a committee." (Yes, you SHOULD!) However, taking action can also mean honoring those who support our chapter and take our events to the next level.

When booking meetings and events or purchasing services or products – remember the companies that have partnered with MPI! Our chapter would not be as successful without the generosity of our partners.

Keep in mind the following title sponsors for the monthly programs as of November, 2007:

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- Galveston Island CVB August, 2007
- St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission September, 2007
- Krisam Group & Global Events Partners October, 2007
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In addition, our Supplier Showcase will be Feb. 28 at the Adams Mark Hotel. If you have purchasing influence within your company or association, be sure to attend to make some new connections.

We are thrilled about the MPI Professional Education Conference coming to Houston. I hope each of you will attend and show your support for our fellow Texas Chapter!

Sincerely,

Nancey Hernandez, CMP
President, MPI D/FW Chapter

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*Interested in volunteering your time on the Current committee?
E-mail editor@mpidfw.org.*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



JANUARY 16
Community Cultural Connection Event
Cost: Complimentary
4-7 p.m.
Weisfeld Center
1508 Cadiz Street
Dallas, TX 75201

JANUARY 24
January Chapter Meeting
Government Affairs & Police Awards
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Dallas Convention Center
650 South Griffin Street
Dallas, TX 75202

FEBRUARY 21
Partyfest
12-5 p.m.
Fairpark – Automobile Building
1300 Robert B. Cullum Blvd.
Dallas, TX 75210

FEBRUARY 28
Annual Supplier Showcase
(Time to be determined)
Adams Mark Hotel
400 North Olive Street
Dallas, TX 75201

MARCH 27
March Chapter Meeting
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
The Fairmont Dallas
1717 North Akard Street
Dallas, TX 75201

APRIL 7
Annual Golf Tournament
11:30 a.m. shotgun
More details to come

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PURE EXPERIENCES

If Everyone Lived Like Me, We Would Need 4.2 Planets



By Jennifer Fortman
Gleneagles Country Club, Plano

Believe or not, it is 2008! As I thought about my New Year's resolutions this year, our September meeting's education topic, Green Meetings, kept coming back to me. If you are anything like me, before that meeting, the terminology "sustainability" and "corporate social responsibility" were catchphrases of the day. Now, it's everywhere I turn. NBC dedicated an entire week of programming to going green, which I discovered while

watching an episode of *30 Rock* last fall. NBC Universal's campaign, "Green is Universal," was aimed at entertaining, informing and empowering Americans to lead greener lives. Even the NBC peacock was completely green.

Still, if you are like I was and a little clueless as to what all this hoopla is about, visit www.myfootprint.org and complete the quiz. It gives you your very own personalized ecological footprint. Ecological footprints document a given population's consumption and waste production expressed in biologically productive land and ocean areas necessary to maintain these services. It turns out that if everyone lived like me, we would need 4.2 planets.

Here are my ecological footprint results:

| Category | Acres |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Food | 5.2 |
| Mobility | 4.4 |
| Shelter | 2.7 |
| Goods/Services | 6.4 |
| Total Footprint | 19 Acres |

Worldwide, there exist 4.5 biologically productive acres per person. Do the math; we are running out of room.

In comparison, the average ecological footprint in the United States is 24 acres per person. Worldwide, there exist 4.5 biologically productive acres per person. Do the math; we are running out of room.

Shockingly, I had never stepped foot in to Whole Foods Market until recently. While reading more about buying organic and/or locally grown foods and after taking the ecological footprint quiz, the big picture has all started to come together for me.

Just a couple years ago, the City of McKinney delivered the large recycling bins to my neighborhood. It took me a while to understand what I could and couldn't recycle. It took me even longer to figure out where to put the extra bin considering the four cars at our home. Okay, so yes, I'm guilty. We have a gargantuan Expedition that is so large I have to pole-vault to get in to it, but we are a family of five. So, as far as New Year's resolutions go, I'm not selling the giant car, but I will try and reduce the size of my ecological footprint.

I've made a few simple changes to reduce my waste, energy consumption and, consequentially, my guilt. I still get the newspaper, but now I only get the weekend edition. I never had time to read during the week and it was just a waste, even if I did recycle it. I've started a compost pile. We open the blinds every day and use natural light. I've insisted my husband find out how he can donate and recycle leftover paint and construction materials from his painting and remodeling business. I've committed to buying local produce. The economist's heart in me is particularly fond of that one! I'm not ready to start a Green Committee at work today, but I think it may be on the horizon.

We Want to Hear From You

What can you do this year to impact the environment? Have you planned a green meeting or event lately? We'd like to hear from you on what you are doing to make a difference. Please e-mail editor@mpidfw.org and share your success stories!

CITY TALK

City Talk is a spotlight on the new development and upcoming events in our chapter's cities, brought to you by your local Convention and Visitors Bureaus.

Upcoming Developments: City of Plano

Plano is "The city that means business." As home to 15 Fortune 500 companies, everyone in Plano understands how important it is to meet and exceed the expectations of sophisticated business people visiting our city.

The growth of Plano and the surrounding area has been phenomenal during the past 25 years. In 1980 the population of Plano was 72,000. Since then, the population has grown by 251 percent to 253,000. With the growth and relocation of such companies as Electronic Data Systems, JCPenney, Frito-Lay, Ericsson, Perot Systems, Rent-A-Center and much more, Plano became a location for businesses to do business. As the population grew, so did the growth of Plano's service industry and the ability to meet and exceed the needs of those meeting in the city.

Plano now has more than 700 full-service restaurants and plenty of hotel space. This past year Plano has added the Staybridge Suites with 112 guest suites, and the 127-room Hyatt Place, which is the new brand for Hyatt. Each of these properties continues to help Plano in answering the needs of the business travelers and those needing a location for their next meeting.

The growth of Plano and the surrounding area has been phenomenal during the past 25 years.

Another exciting accommodation venue that recently opened include the NYLO Hotel, which broke ground a year ago and opened in December. This 176-room lifestyle hotel was the first NYLO to open in the country and features the brand's hallmark urban loft design along with soaring ceilings, custom-designed furnishings, PURE guest rooms designed for allergy-sensitive guests, an urban, loft-style bar, 24-hour three-meal restaurant and high-tech amenities throughout the hotel.

This year, Plano plans to add two new full-service properties to its inventory of rooms: a 240-room Doubletree, which will be in Granite Park, and a 276-room Renaissance Hotel, which will be located in phase II of the Legacy Town Center. Starwood Hotels & Resorts has plans to build one of its new, 136-room Aloft hotels in Plano. These new properties will offer meeting professionals alternatives in the area and make it possible for Plano to continue to grow and offer some of the best meeting facilities and accommodations in the area. ▀



The Angelika is a stylish five-screen boutique cinema devoted to independent and specialty film. Image courtesy Legacy Town Centre. Angelika Film Center & Café.



Located just minutes north of downtown Dallas is Plano Centre, the city-owned convention center that provides 86,400 sq. ft. of meeting space, 18 breakout rooms, state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment, full-service business center and on-site, full-service catering. Image courtesy of the Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau.

For More Information

For more information on Plano and the Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau please log on to www.planocvb.com or call 1-800-81-PLANO.

How to Book the Best

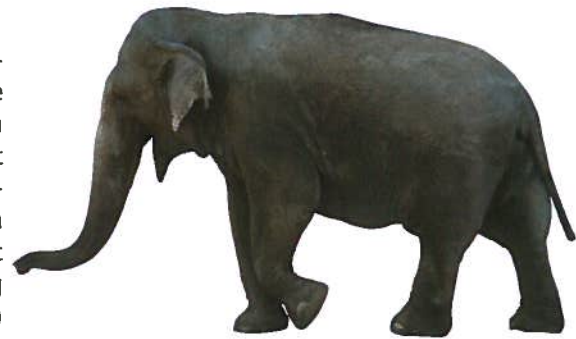
By O.D. O'Donnell

Of course it goes without saying that once you know the date, venue and time of your event, the entertainment should blend in with the theme or type of function you are planning.

Television and destinations like Las Vegas, Atlantic City, N.J., and various vacation resorts have changed the way almost everyone thinks of entertainment these days. Of course, hosts still want jazz trios or dance bands for their events, but more and more entertainment buyers are looking for something different to highlight or create buzz about their event.

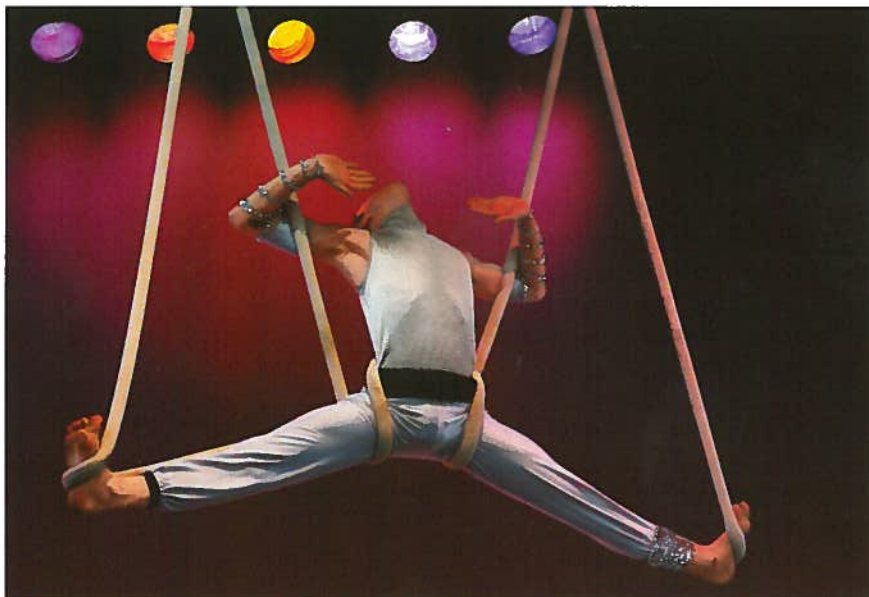
We all know a big-name Las Vegas performer will certainly provide the buzz to create that excitement we are all looking for when we plan

rectly over the guests who were gathered for a cocktail reception. Imagine how excited you would become with a group of aerialists performing just a few feet over your head. I have arranged a hot air balloon race for a group teambuilding exercise. (Not exactly another boring teambuilding session in a closed-off hotel room.) At a black-tie company dinner, I arranged six of the roughest-toughest looking cowboys to enter through different doors in the ballroom. We had the cowboys rigged with cordless microphones. Guests could hear them mutter that they were planning on "getting the president" of the company, along with various other unmentionable outbursts. The CEO was able



Everyone has seen celebrity impressionists of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis, Tom Jones, Cher and so on, but a few months ago I was asked to provide 10 different celebrity look-alikes. However, that wasn't the challenge. The company was a Canadian business, and it needed Canadian star look-alikes! Whether you need your CEO to enter the convention on the back of a longhorn steer, or arrange to have the president of a company delivered to the stage at an outdoor event on an elephant, an agent can assist you with creative and clever ideas.

By using a qualified agent, matters pertaining to the entertainment are his or her responsibility. An agent offers solutions, not problems. A good agent is able to save you time and money, as well as make creative suggestions. If it is your responsibility to secure great entertainment or if you want something unique to enhance a particular meeting or event, you should definitely discuss your options with a qualified professional entertainment agent. ▀



an event. Unfortunately, most of us don't have the budget to afford this type of entertainment. Believe it or not, there are still ways to create that buzz without a six-figure entertainment budget. In recent months, I had aerialists hanging from the ceiling at the Fort Worth Convention center doing their various tricks and moves di-

to slip out the back of the stage unnoticed and down the hall where I had a white horse and white hat waiting for him. After mounting the horse he went trotting off into the ballroom, all the while shouting that he was going to save the president of the company. This received quite a laugh from all in attendance.

More and more entertainment buyers are looking for something different to highlight or create buzz about their event.

Reinventing Inven

Planners and Designers Save by Reusing and Redesigning Props

By Lindsey Getz

Props can make all the difference when it comes to décor for your event, and having a variety already in stock can make life much easier. However, owning a large inventory of props can cause difficulties when it comes to storage, and can ultimately cost you big bucks. Finding creative ways to reuse props – and knowing when it's time to let go – is crucial for moving your business forward.

Finding storage space is one of the major difficulties of owning a large inventory of props. "Simply put, we store props anywhere we can," says Bob Winans, owner of Meeting Dynamics Inc., which has its corporate offices on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina. "The majority of scenery is stored in our warehouse. However, we store props anywhere there is space appropriate for storage. That could include anything from inside our offices to storage containers and facilities in Chicago, Augusta, Atlanta and Jacksonville." Meeting Dynamics even uses 18-wheelers to store props so they're ready to transport.

Since renting storage space can be costly, many prop and event planning companies choose to house their props in personal warehouses. "At-

Finding creative ways to reuse props – and knowing when it's time to let go – is crucial for moving your business forward.

tached to our wood shop and paint deck we have a warehouse that we store the props in," says Royce Mason, president of Signature Event Group in Portland, Ore. "The warehouse is located close to the downtown area for easy access to the convention center and major hotels."

However, even if you own a warehouse, it can be tricky fitting everything in and maneuvering props in and out of storage. "Our smaller props are usually stored on the ground in rolling crates, and the larger props are stored on the ground or on an elevated mezzanine shelf," says Dave DuVall, staging and rentals manager at Sunbelt Scenic Studios Inc., in Tempe, Ariz. "Some props are awkward in shape, size and weight, so we try to keep the heavier and larger items on floor level. To remove some props we have to use a forklift with

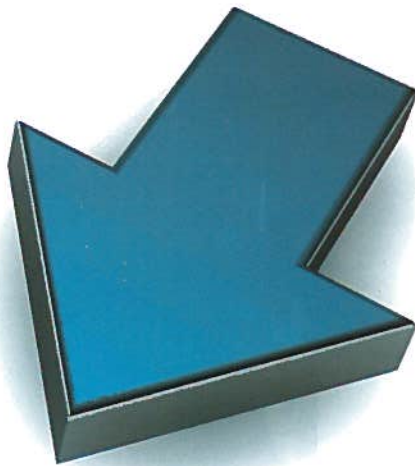
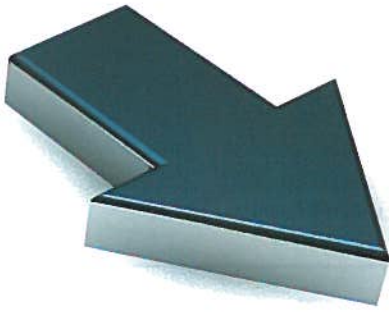
an open metal cage that allows things to be pulled down more safely."

Use It or Lose It

The best way to get the full value out of a prop is to find creative ways to use it over and over again. "We are quickly out-growing the 25,000-plus square feet of conventional storage space we currently manage at our corporate office," says Winans. "And



tory



so, we try to reinvent and redesign props for many different occasions. By restoring our props, we are able to keep costs down for customers."

With a little creativity, even the most unusual props can be reused. "We created something we called 'The Hell Wall,' which had things like faux stone and skeleton parts for an Indiana Jones party," recalls Mason. "I can remember my designer saying, 'You'll never rent that again.' Well, five years later, we turned the wall into a giant waterfall and have used it for a fire theme, a jungle safari

and even a Pirates of the Caribbean-themed party."

Daina Carter, president of Design Perfect Inc., in Bellevue, Wash., also tries to reuse whatever props she can. "We are able to reuse props in many ways," she says. "For instance, our cast iron street lamps and signs are used for a multitude of event themes like Mardi Gras, New York, France and more. For street signs, we just change the names to correspond with the location. Our columns and arches are also often repainted to fit a specific theme, whether it be medieval to weddings to Greece."

Of course some elaborate theme-specific props must be viewed as an investment that can't be used quite as often. These are often worth the money because of their special appeal. "Props such as an 18-foot Eiffel Tower or a 14-foot Asian pagoda are not so universal," says Carter. But don't be too quick to count these props out, since they might be central to your décor. "We consider these focal points at an event," she says.

Saying Goodbye

Parting with props can be difficult, and you may have the urge to hang on to things even if they haven't been used in quite a while. But if it's not reusable, and hasn't been onstage in over a year, it might be time to consider letting it go.

Completing a thorough assessment of the inventory is the best way to compile a list of props that should be thrown out. Carter does her "spring cleaning" each year to assess the props. "We purge our inventory every spring," she says. "We discard items that are not in style anymore, were a fad of the time, or are too damaged to repair.

"We are currently reassessing things like what we already have stored, how much storage costs per square foot and how many times we expect a prop to go out," says Mason. "If something hasn't gone

out in a year, it's red-flagged and reassessed."

Of course letting go isn't always easy, especially if a prop has sentimental value. "There are some props that have been around for almost 20 years, when my dad started the business, and I will never throw them out," says Mason.

"We try to periodically get rid of any props that are either old, worn or that require too much prep work for a rental. Keeping only the regularly used props is very sensible instead of wasting storage space on items that are not generating significant income," says Duvall. "We like to donate some of the retired props to employees or small schools that may be able to use them."



Cost Savings with Backdrops

If you're dealing with prop storing difficulties, consider using a backdrop for your event's décor. "By hanging a backdrop you are instantly transported from one world to another," says Bev Pamensky Murray, president of DreamWorld Backdrops in San Diego. "Your stage is set and you're ready to go!"

Murray always recommends using a backdrop, instead of props for the following reasons: They are lightweight, easy to install, can be shipped door-to-door nationwide and the price of shipping is cheaper than shipping heavy props.

Backdrops are easily stored and take up very little room. "Each of our 4,000-plus backdrops and drapery
continued on page 12

Being sensible about storage options for your company's props and regularly assessing what to keep and get rid of can save your business from many financial burdens.

continued from page 11

are folded and rolled similar to how you'd store a sleeping bag, placed in plastic bins to be sealed from the elements, and stored among numbered bins in our 40,000-square-foot warehouse," explains Bob Lindoerfer, president of Los Angeles-based Grosh Scenic Rentals.

By using a backdrop, you can also avoid purchasing multiple props or paying high costs to ship them. "For many types of indoor events,

backdrops are the easiest and most cost-effective way to create a theme and set the ambiance," says Clayton Hellis, president of Backdrops Fantastic in Macon, Ga. Plus, backdrops can be used for almost any theme. "The range of different types of events continues to surprise us," says Hellis. "Our golf backdrops were in use at the Masters Golf Tournament, and many of our sports backdrops are used in national sports team events."

Being sensible about storage options for your company's props and regularly assessing what to keep and get rid of can save your business from many financial burdens. In addition, considering alternatives to traditional props can not only save time and money, but can also help keep things stress-free! ▀

Lindsey Getz is a freelance writer based in Royersford, Pa. She can be reached at lindsey.getz@yahoo.com

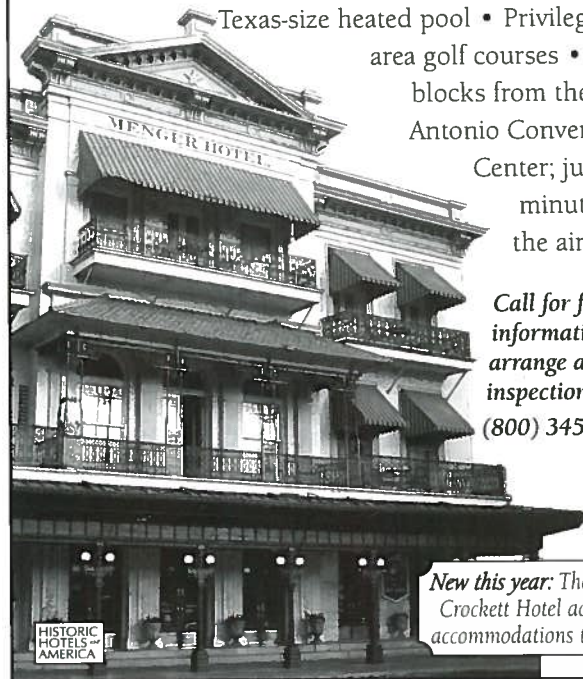
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The Changing Face of Meetings

By Mark Hubrich

Meetings consolidation, purchasing and procurement is bringing change. Welcome to the brave new world and Wild West of the meetings industry. Are you going to evolve with it or be left behind?

I have seen this industry change rapidly over the last seven years and see a new frontier of change ahead of us. That change is new meeting tools for consolidation, spend tracking and reporting and consolidated data. This is why technology is fun. I can recall five years ago the challenges convincing someone of the benefits of using an online registration tool as opposed to meetings managed by manual processes and faxes. Today using online registration is a standard and there is no longer a need to convince people of its benefits. The new frontier is meetings consolidation and strategic meetings management.

Some of the tenets from Meeting Professionals International (MPI) over recent years are: having a seat at the table, engage blue ocean strategies to redefine our industry to create a better and more efficient environment, and now co-creation for a brighter potential future. These ideals must be applied to meetings consolidation to produce more influence for the meeting professional and raise the awareness and credibility of our roles in business.

What is a constant theme in business? Efficiency and doing more with less budget. Technology is a tool to innovate and change process to allow workers to do more with less. What does meetings consolidation mean to you, and what are the driving factors to it?

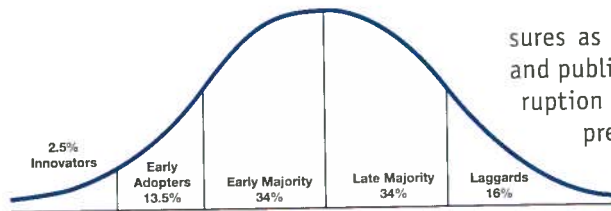
Meetings consolidation is a strategic initiative and concept to apply analytics and processes to the expense side of business. It is typically being driven by a senior executive/CFO of the organization in order to get better and more accurate knowledge of the overall impact of meetings and, thereby, reduce costs to the organization. Some corporations that have successfully implemented meetings consolidation have recognized percentage savings of up to 25 percent.

The goal of a successful meetings consolidation program is to have a clear view of overall meetings spend across vendors and to bring savings by narrowing the number of vendors to a small, preferred list. This creates the opportunity to bring bulk purchasing power and strength to price

negotiation. Meetings consolidation is and will be different for different companies and different industries, but there are some similarities and common threads across the industry:

- Create a list of preferred vendors for the meetings department.
- Implement a centralized technology database and reporting to capture and measure meetings expenditure.
- Create management approval processes and budget levels; likely the review and approval of a procurement or sourcing expert.
- Create criteria to measure the return and success of an event and how it is aligned with the strategic goals of the organization.

In Geoffrey Moore's book *Crossing the Chasm*, he introduces a technology adoption lifecycle (see graph) and classifies five different types of behavior among technology users. In my opinion, with regard to the technology of online registration, we are in the down slope of the bell curve;



Source: Geoffrey Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*

however, with meetings consolidation, I view the industry as still in the infant stages of innovators and early adopters.

What is driving the proliferation of meetings consolidation? Corporations, especially public ones, are under quarterly pressure to hold down expenses and do more with less. If they are successful, they are rewarded by Wall Street. The new mantra is to cut costs and demonstrate efficiency or be prepared to be on the street looking for a new job. Meetings consolidation requires setting up approval processes and oversight for expense management. This is driven from tighter financial oversight pres-

ures as a result of Sarbanes Oxley and public examples of financial corruption of cases such as Enron. This pressure is passed down the chain from Wall Street to senior executives to meeting professionals and procurement.

The solution to the change that is occurring is assimilation and accommodation. Assimilate new technologies and processes and work the new information into your conception of the meetings world. Business rewards those that do this successfully and penalizes those that do not. To have a seat at the table, a planner must be proactive and drive the change and show value.

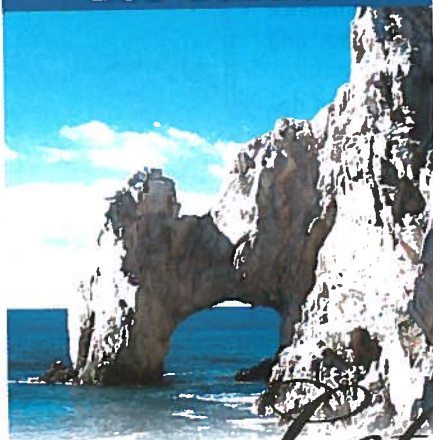
As Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric recommends: "Learn to love change. Change is occurring as you've never seen it and at speeds you've never seen." This is the future of the meetings industry; embrace it for success. ▀

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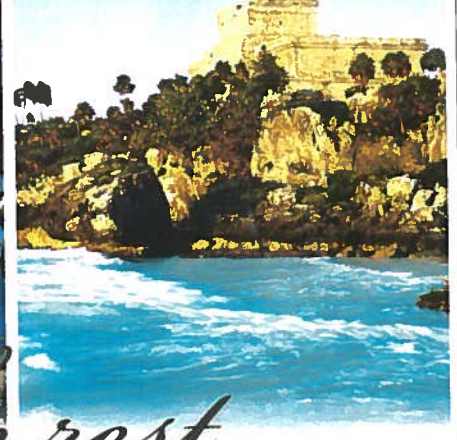
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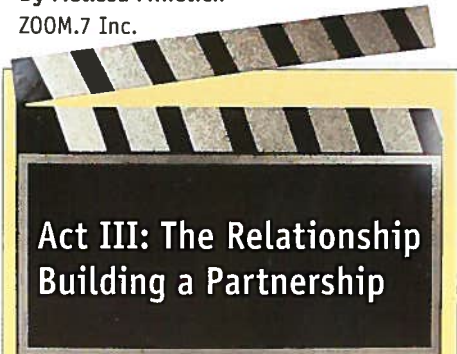
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The Meeting Professional's Dilemma

A Play in Three Acts

By Melissa Mihelich
ZOOM.7 Inc.



The scene: A living room furnished with a sofa, two armchairs and a coffee table. A flickering fire illuminates the room. In front of the fireplace, a shaggy dog lies curled up for a nap. CMP and her husband, Mr. CMP, sit quietly. Each reads a section of the evening paper. CMP looks up thoughtfully and speaks.

CMP: I'm just not sure it's working.

Mr. CMP: What's that?

CMP: I'm just not sure the producer is getting where I want to go. We meet, we e-mail, we talk on the phone, but I'm not sure they hear what I'm saying.

Mr. CMP: Do you hear what they're saying to you?

CMP: What do you mean? I'm trying to plan a big meeting here and am under tremendous pressure. I need them to listen to me.

Mr. CMP: Of course you do. But remember the first year we were married? It was a little bumpy at times. We had to build good communication habits. If you think this professional relationship has merit, then you need to find the right tools. This has to be a two-way street. You have your areas of expertise, and there is no one better, but so do they. This may be a situation where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

CMP: I suppose you're right. I think I'd better make some notes while I'm thinking about it.

Mr. CMP: exits while CMP jots down her ideas. The dog raises his head, considers his choices, then goes back to sleep.

In previous Acts, our heroine CMP was given the daunting task of planning a large, last-minute meeting. After careful consideration, she chose a producer to partner with on the project, to help execute the production elements.



To make the most of your partnership with a producer, consider the following:

Communicate

- Communicate clearly and directly and expect to be communicated with in the same manner.
- Avoid jargon and buzz words, and don't let others obscure the conversation with technical mumbo jumbo.
- If you don't understand, ask until you do. Be patient with others so they will ask the questions they need to ask in order to feel comfortable.

Schedule

- Schedules are a collaborative effort. For the timeline to be meaningful, each discipline needs to have input.

Inform

- Information is power, but it is not a weapon. Empower the team. Share information.

Information is power, but it is not a weapon. Empower the team. Share information.

- The more the team understands the full scope of the project, the more ownership they have in the process.

Respect

- Respect the abilities and expertise of others.
- Often an outsider can offer a unique and valuable perspective an insider can't see.
- Expect to be treated with respect as the project leader and as a professional.

Expect

- Assign clear and defined areas of responsibility to each team member.
- Be clear in your expectations.

Accept

- Hold yourself accountable for your actions and hold other accountable for theirs.

Recognize

- Recognize the accomplishments of each team member at every opportunity. This is a powerful motivating factor.

Final scene on page 16

The scene: Uncomfortably small room in the backstage area of a convention center. An exhausted CMP and her assistants sit at a folding table covered with piles of name badges, tote bags, empty soft drink cans and a partially eaten club sandwich. The Boss enters.

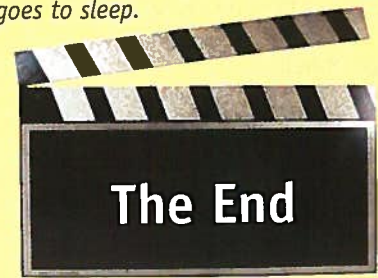
The Boss: Congratulations, everyone! I just spoke with the VP of Marketing, and she is thrilled with

the meeting. She said the branding was spot on. They are already talking about making next year's meeting even bigger! CMP, you built a great team and it showed. Let's go celebrate. I'm buying.

Smiling and laughing, the group exits – heading off to enjoy their victory.

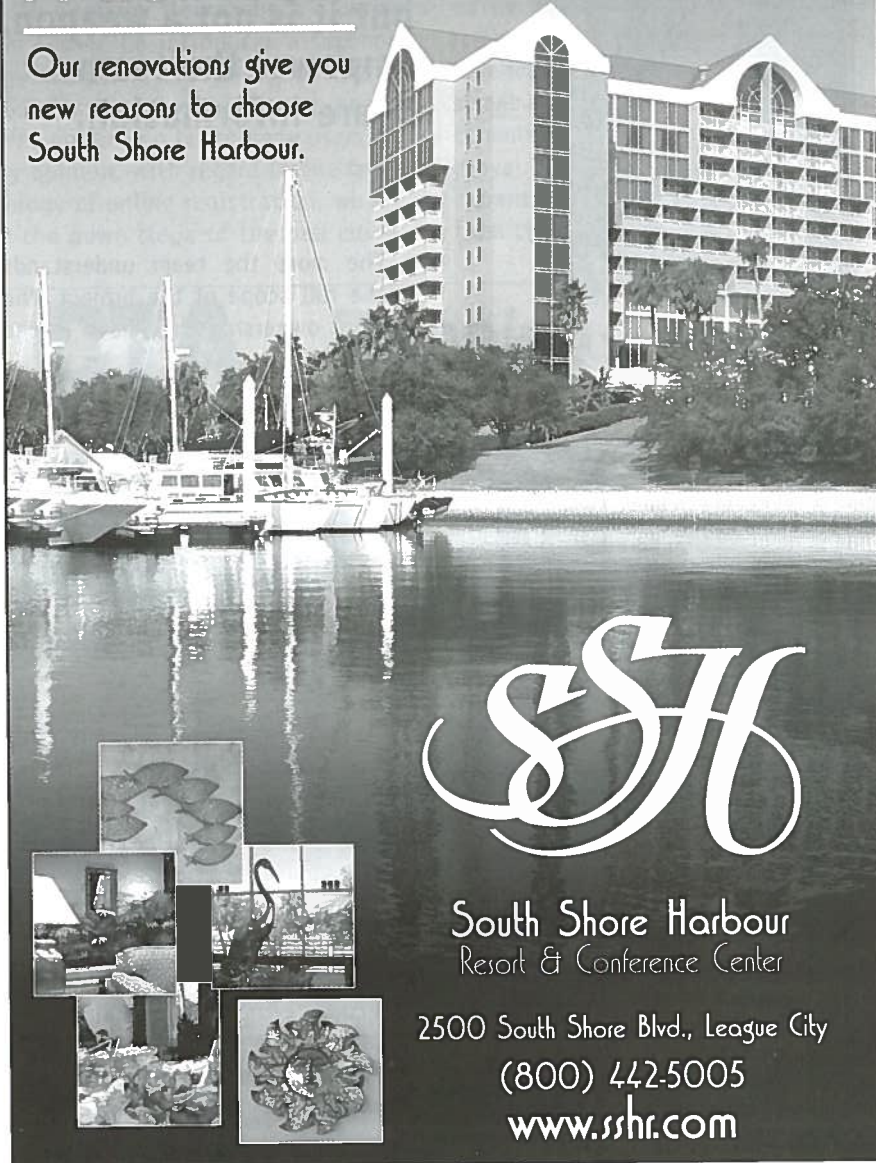
As the door closes and the lights dim, the shaggy dog enters. He

jumps up on the table, eats the sandwich, then crawls under the table and goes to sleep.



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Westin City Center

Alicia V. Weddle

Lillie West
Dallas Fan Fares, Inc.

Betsy Yeckel

Eddie Hill of Team Up, Inc.

Q. What is your position?

Owner of Team Up, Inc., a teambuilding and training company based in Dallas. We've been in business for four years.

Q. What are your job responsibilities?

I lead a team of wonderful, creative people who plan and carry out fun and motivating teambuilding events. We work with venues of all types with some great partners. I get to do things like: lead Amazing Races, play "Howie" for Team Deal or No Deal and develop new activities like Team Texas Hold'em. Other job duties include: writing and delivering customized training sessions, interactive seminars and speeches.



Eddie Hill knows how to balance business and fun.

Q. NAME ONE INTERESTING FACT ABOUT YOURSELF THAT NO ONE MAY KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I DO A LOT OF WRITING AND THIS YEAR RELEASED MY FIRST BOOK, CALLED *THE COACHES MOTIVATIONAL PLAYBOOK* (AVAILABLE AT WWW.AMAZON.COM).

Q. What are the most rewarding aspects of your position?

I like making event planners heroes to their clients. Last year we introduced something called "Teambuilding with a Purpose" that helps groups give back to the community during their events. We held a "Dress for Less" fashion show and at the end presented the clothing to a local woman's shelter. We also held a scavenger hunt where the company bought flowers and fruit at the farmers market and then turned them into "creative edible creatures," which they took to a retirement home to share with the residents. It was such an incredible experience for everyone that we forgot to keep score, and the event planner cried.

Q. What is an accomplishment of which you are most proud?

The knot-tying merit badge in the seventh grade was a biggy! Seriously, I find it very rewarding getting to do what I love full time and being called back again and again by the same people. I'm excited Team Up, Inc. will be on national TV again, leading teambuilding for a new reality show on TLC this month.

Q. What is your favorite destination?

I love Lake Tahoe. Just thinking about makes me want to book a trip.

Q. What is your favorite pastime?

I enjoy hanging out with my family and sneaking off to play golf.



What picture or artifact do you have on your desk?

Just beside a picture of my two wonderful kids, who are 5 and 7, is a cool ping-pong ball-launcher our participants shoot at a bull's eye during Crazy Olympics.

Who do you admire?

I admire John Wooden, and it has nothing to do with basketball and everything about being a really good person. Check out his autobiography, *Wooden*.

If you were to TIVO a show, what would it be?

The Office

What is your best all-time memory?

A date at a Ranger game 10 years ago, when this beautiful girl bought me an ice cream cone in one of those cool little baseball caps. It started something really special.

Ultimate Cuisine by Chef Tom



By Matthew Massengale, DMCP, CMP



Chef Thomas T. McGrath, III, is the chef and owner of the Dallas/Fort Worth-based catering company, Ultimate Cuisine by Chef Tom. Chef McGrath began his professional culinary career in 1995 when he graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in New York. Chef McGrath specializes in American Regional and Mediterranean cuisine.

Join us as we turn over a new leaf. Welcome to "Off the Vine," the hottest place to come for the latest trends in food and beverage, cool tips from great local chefs and the latest news from the culinary world. "Off the Vine" is proudly sponsored by The Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Off the Vine: Chef McGrath, what do feel is currently "hot" in food and beverage?

Chef McGrath:

- Food is the centerpiece of festive gatherings. The guest is much more educated than 10 years ago, and they like to discuss their new-found hobby (food) because it is a "glamorous" trade.
- Small food is definitely in! Appetizers and hors d'oeuvres parties are on the rise again. Small personal vessels and utensils, either china or disposable, can still make or break a creation. Clients are leaning toward using all of the new disposable mini serving vessels, which are close to the real thing to alleviate the cost with staff and rentals.
- With the popularity of the Food Network, guests are more aware of seasonal ingredients. They are looking for more variety and smaller portions to get a wider range of tastes and flavors.
- Pairing small courses of regional fare with wines and liqueurs from the area, is so much more appreciated now. They (clients) are looking to be surprised.

Clients have gravitated away from the heavy, sit-down meals and opted for a lighter fare, but have no fear, all trends are cyclical.

Off the Vine: What future trends in food and beverage do you see?

Chef McGrath: Classical cuisine is going to make a comeback and meet the small food trend. It all depends on how convenient you make it for the guest. Classical cuisine definitely involves the use of fat. Whether it be duck or goose, infused oils, bacon dripping or any other type of fat. The guest has figured out that fat is your

friend and that it makes everything taste good. Everything good starts with whole butter and garlic and finishes with heavy cream. In smaller amounts, as with small food, they are willing to accept a heavier classical menu item done in a moderate portion.



Off the Vine: Do you have a culinary tip or trick that you would like to share?

Chef McGrath:

- Produce is really where it's at. Stay tuned into your purveyors on a daily basis, both local and regional.
- Try things that you have never used before.
- Keep your staff educated. Their awareness (and knowledge) will be reflected in the outcome of the dish. Love of food shines through in flavor.

Small food is definitely in! Appetizers and hors d'oeuvres parties are on the rise again. Small personal vessels and utensils, either china or disposable can still make or break a creation.

Off the Vine: Would you like to share your favorite hors d'oeuvres recipe?

Chef McGrath: One of our most popular hors d'oeuvres is Quail Lollipops.

Quail Lollipops

- Semi boneless quail without the wings, cut in half.
- Marinate in blood orange juice for 24 hours.
- Fold or roll the breast meat around the drumstick and wrap with bacon.
- Place with drumstick (like a handle) standing up on a pan and freeze.
- When ready to serve, deep fry in goose fat until the bacon is just starting to crisp. Drain.
- Place on a cooking pan and finish (until cooked through) in the oven at a low temperature.
- Served with a Patrón Citronage and Agave Nectar Reduction. ▸

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For More Information

For additional information please contact: *Ultimate Cuisine* by Chef Tom at 817.570.0997 or visit www.ultimatecuisinedfw.com.

Did You Know?

MPI D/FW Chapter has recruited 135 new members since June 1, 2007! Congratulations is in order to the Membership Committee.

At the next MPI event you attend, please take time to welcome new members and let them know we are glad to have them as a member of our association.

(See p. 16 for a listing of the newest MPI D/FW members.)

COCKTAILS, COUTURE AND CANAPÉS

Cocktails, Couture and Canapés is our publication's Society Section. Sandie Fouke and Lise' Lang will bring you the latest in event trends, keep you posted on what's hot, what's not and, generally speaking, keep you "in the know"!

New Year's Eve Resolutions and Traditions

Our MPI family shares their New Year's Eve resolutions and personal family traditions.

Angela Abernaty-Smith

Quiet Times Concierge

One of my family's New Year's Eve traditions is for all of us to gather at our home, listen to music, watch the ball drop in New York's Times Square and just enjoy each other as the new year came in. Family is very important in our home. Of course, what would New Year's Eve be without great home-cooked New Mexico-style Mexican food? Menudo, asado, homemade tortillas, tamales, fresh homemade salsa, chili Verde, enchiladas, tacos with all the rice and beans you could eat and top it off with wonderful margaritas and beer. Yummy!

One year, we had a dance-off with some of the kids who were there. Since my son was born on New Year's in 1987, we always had a party for him and would give the kids champagne glasses with sparkling grape juice to toast the new year and his birthday.



Another year we attended a wedding reception on New Year's Eve and, needless to say, at midnight, everyone was soaked in champagne because everyone "shot" the corks from the bottles.

Kendall Niehols

The Oceanaire Seafood Room

My favorite thing to do in January 2008 is to go on vacation with my mom. We try to go at the beginning of every year.

Lindsey Southall

7-Eleven, Inc.

As for New Year's traditions, the older my brother and I got we started to reserve New Year's Eve as our time to celebrate with our friends. However, for New Year's Day, it was mandatory for us to be with our family. My mom makes a Southern family traditional meal, which includes black-eyed peas for good luck and cabbage for money, all in hopes of receiving these items for the New Year.

Kelly Roche

Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau

In 2005, I replaced New Year's resolutions with quotes to live by:

2005: "Let it Go."

2006: "Don't worry about things you have no control over."

2007: "It is what it is!"

2008: To be announced

My New Year's Day family tradition is an all-day food fest with smoked turkey and green cabbage "to ensure you have lots of money for the coming year." ▸



Building Member Loyalty

By Robert Sanchez, CMP

Listen to your Members

Any issue that needs addressing requires an open ear before a successful solution can be met.

Are you a good listener? Do you ask the right questions, and how do you ask those questions?

Inquiries delivered with sincerity and in an encouraging manner will have a greater impact and put the responder more at ease. And, certainly, gaining and holding eye contact indicates you are truly listening and interested in the answer, not merely posing a trite question.

Celebrate Your Members

Members are inclined to acknowledge awards justifiably earned by other members, and loyalty develops when members realize others' contributions are being recognized. Awards and honors represent the effort, time, energy and expertise of the honoree. All mem-

bers will recognize your efforts to make them feel good about themselves. Anything that uplifts members' spirits will be rewarded with loyalty.

Update Members Frequently with Relevant News

Regular communications through printed materials such as bulletins, e-mails and other media lets members know you are continuously thinking of them. In your materials, reinforce that your organization delivers real value and meaning pertinent to their lives. Offer information that is both timely and essential.

Engage Members

Encouraging members to attend events and volunteer their time, energy and experience are just some of the ways to keep and maintain loyalty. You can also serve membership and add value to your base through Internet

connections. Through your Web site, for example, members can link to other organizations and, in doing so, widen their realm of connections, expertise and industry knowledge. Collaborative effort is good networking.

Accentuate the Positives

Keeping members educated on all facets on how your organization helps them will foster loyalty. Members need to be reminded of their organization's value. One way to engender member loyalty is by conducting a simple survey to determine what topics are of concern to members – and then publishing the survey results for all to see.

Acknowledging loyalty is the cornerstone of member allegiance; your members expect you to appreciate what they need, want and expect. When you deliver on these criteria, you solidify a base that will continue to support your organization for many years. ▀

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Teresa Krist, CMP
Event Coordinator
Microsoft Across America

Joyce Nissen
Event Coordinator
McKinney Performing Arts Center



Dvorah Evans is honored with Spirit Award

About Dvorah A. Evans, CMP



Dvorah A. Evans, CMP, serves as the director of Conventions & Tourism for the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce, which at 80 years and nearly 2,000 members is the oldest and largest African-American chamber of commerce in the nation. Evans is responsible for the marketing and promotion of the City of Dallas as a major meeting and leisure destination for minority conventions and tourists. She also coordinates several of the chamber's annual events, as well as events for the Texas and National Associations of African American Chambers of Commerce.

Evans has been active in the meetings industry for more than 12 years and holds membership in several national industry organizations. She also teaches meeting management courses as an adjunct professor at Richland

College and currently serves on the Richland College Travel, Exposition and Meeting Management (TEMM) Advisory Board where she chairs the Marketing Committee.

Evans has been a member of MPI since 1999. She served three years on the D/FW Board of Directors, including one year on the Executive Committee as the 2002-03 vice president of PR & Marketing. She has won numerous D/FW chapter awards including the 2001 Rising Star of the Year and, most recently, the 2007 Spirit Award.

In international service, Evans served two terms on the MPI International Board of Directors and served as the Board Liaison to MPI's new Student/Faculty Committee. She has also served on MPI's International Awards Committee, Multicultural Initiative Committee, International Marketing Committee, Government Affairs Committee and was the recipient of the 2001-02 Tomorrow's Leader of MPI Award. ▀

"Dvorah Evans has continually stayed involved with the MPI DFW Chapter, even after serving on our Board of Directors and then the International Board of Directors. She has kept us all 'in the know' and shares her insight and knowledge. Dvorah truly has the best interests of the Chapter at heart and has always selflessly offered leadership when and where needed."

– Nancey Hernandez, CMP,
President, MPI D/FW

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

BANQUET FACILITIES

Waxahachie Civic Center.....21

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS

Plano CVB.....Inside Back Cover

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

The CTA Group..... 14

HOTELS & RESORTS

Historic Hotels of AmericaInside Back Cover

Marriott Grand Hotel Resort &

Golf Club..... Outside Back Cover

Menger Historic Hotel 12

Nouth Lake Tahoe Resort6

South Shore Harbour Resort & Conference 16

MEETING & BANQUET FACILITIES

Waxahachie Civic Center.....21

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