


CURRENT

MAGAZINE

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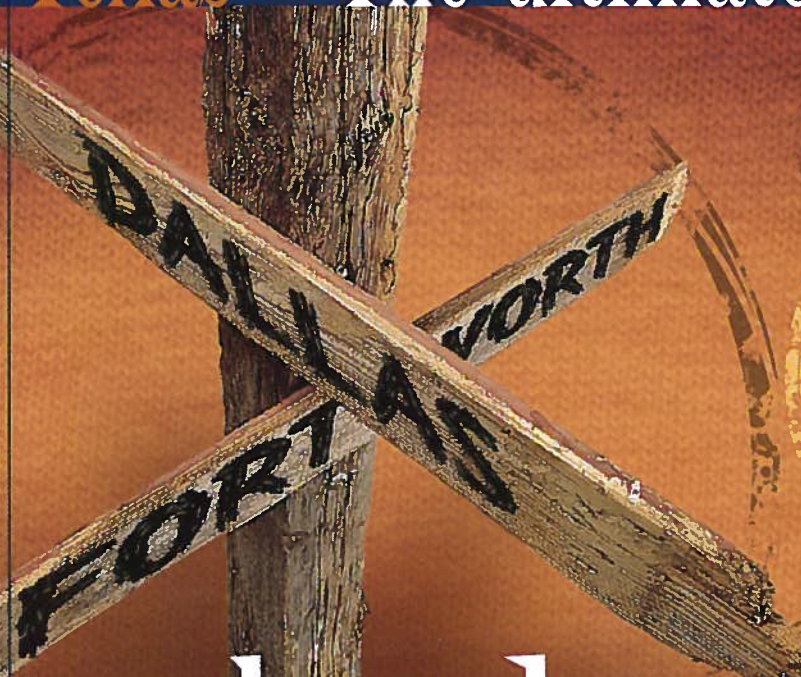
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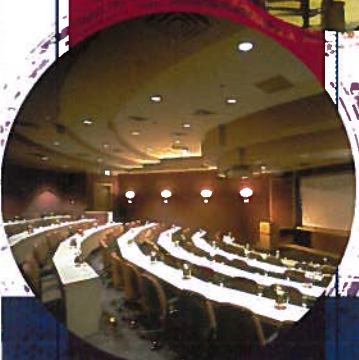
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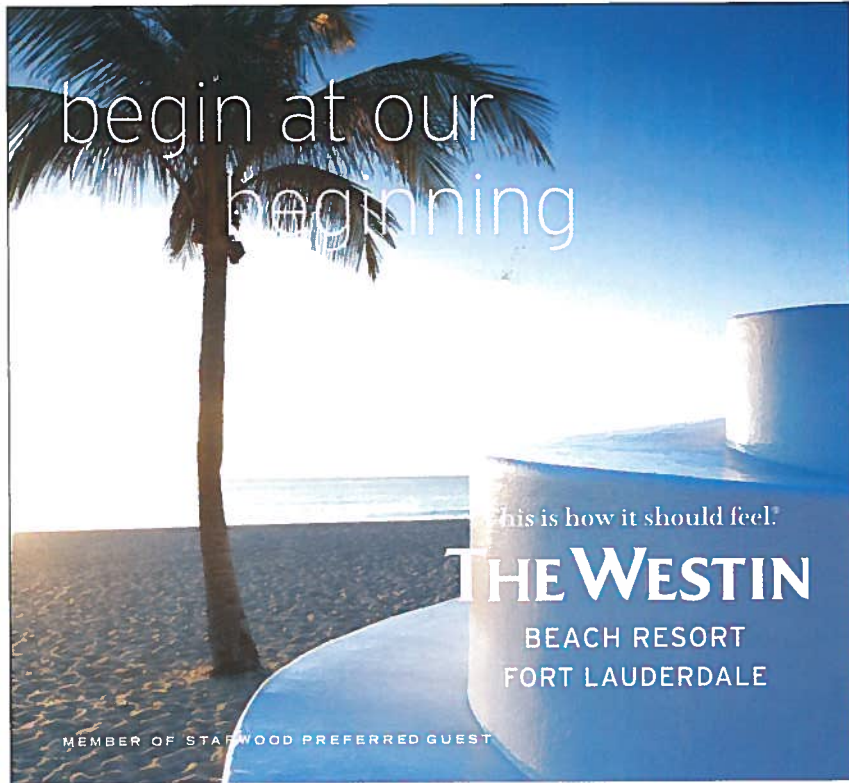
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By Carol Benavidez, CMP
HelmsBriscoe

Encourage others to volunteer time and give back to the local community and world.



MPI D/FW Chapter Gives Back

One of the goals of the 2008-09 term was to continue the tradition of Community Service and place giving back in the forefront. It is exciting and rewarding to report the MPI D/FW Chapter is right on target.

- In lieu of a plaque, the MPI D/FW Chapter gives \$50 to a charity as a thank you to those giving to our chapter for a location, sponsor or speaker. At each monthly meeting the venue, sponsor and speaker select a charity of their choice.
- Due to technology, we are able to collect funds online during registration for the Jan Pollard Award for Professional Growth (JPA) with year to date amounts at \$2,600. Please check our Website, www.mpidfw.org, for member benefits to qualify and apply for Scholarship Educational Funds.
- One of our sister chapters was in need after Hurricane Ike. We were able to send a check for \$2,000 to the Houston Area Chapter. This enabled the donation to split between two hospital-ity families in Galveston.
- With the assistance of a grant through the MPI Foundation we were able to offer a complimentary meeting in January to hear local industry leaders on government affairs. In addition, we focused on the current needs and offered a complimentary workshop on Career Services.
- We have a very active Chapter Charity Relations Committee, and it has a hefty goal of raising \$10,000 in donations to the local community and 1,000 volunteer hours for this term. At press time:
 - July:** SPCA, \$625 in pet supplies, food and cash donations
 - August:** Head Start of Greater Dallas, School Supplies: \$1,950
 - September:** Austin Shelter, \$1,200 in goods
 - October:** North Texas Food Bank, \$600 food items and cash donations, plus 55 volunteer hours
 - November:** Wednesday's Child, \$300 cash donations
 - December:** Love for Kids Christmas Party, 558 volunteer hours; MPI Foundation: \$2,500 from silent auction proceeds
- As the term progresses and our newly formed Corporate Social Responsibility Committee works closely with Chapter Charity Relations, there will be more to review by July 1.

So, please encourage others to volunteer time and give back to the local community and world. I am a true believer of paying it forward and many rewards will come back to you. You can only grow if you challenge yourself.

Sincerely,

Carol Benavidez, CMP
MPI D/FW Chapter President

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



MARCH 3

All Chapter Committee Meeting
6 – 7:30 p.m.
Addison Conference Centre
15650 Addison Road
Addison, TX 75001

MARCH 26

Annual Supplier Showcase
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Plano Centre
2000 East Spring Creek Parkway
Plano, TX 75074

APRIL 7

All Chapter Committee Meeting
6 – 7:30 p.m.
Addison Conference Centre
15650 Addison Road
Addison, TX 75001

APRIL 23

Monthly Chapter Meeting
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
The Adolphus Hotel
1321 Commerce Street
Dallas, TX 75202

MAY 5

All Chapter Committee Meeting
6 – 7:30 p.m.
Addison Conference Centre
15650 Addison Road
Addison, TX 75001



Please register online at
www.mpidfw.org.

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Monday, May 4, 2009
Trophy Country Club (Trophy Club, TX)

10 a.m. Shotgun Start
Networking and Awards Ceremony
Immediately Following

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 Garland



GISSD Special Events Center.

The Hyatt Touch® will soon be within your reach with the opening of Hyatt Place Dallas/Garland and Firewheel Conference Center. This beautiful hotel and convention center, located at 5101 North President George Bush Highway, will open its doors on May 14. Guests at Hyatt Place will enjoy a spacious guestroom with a 42-inch flat-panel HDTV, its signature Hyatt Grand Bed™, a plush cozy corner oversized sofa-sleeper that is separated from the sleeping area, and complimentary high-speed WiFi Internet access throughout the hotel. Garland's newest hotel will offer 12,000 square feet of flexible meeting space. All-inclusive meeting packages, tailored to specific needs, may include unique food and beverage options and cutting-edge A/V equipment and technology.

The City of Garland offers many options for event and meeting venues. The Atrium at the Granville Arts Center offers a picturesque location for corporate banquets, weddings, receptions and a wide variety of other events. Located in historic Downtown Garland and adjacent to the DART Light Rail Station, the Atrium is easily accessed from throughout the D/FW

metroplex and offers more than 14,000 square feet of banquet or meeting space. Special amenities include an elegant lobby, catering kitchen and a 4,800-square-foot courtyard.

The Garland ISD Special Events Center can accommodate large and small events with both a first-class arena and full conference center. The center's 18,000 square feet of convention, training and meeting space includes a ballroom with dividing

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walls, a tiered lecture hall and two additional meeting rooms.

Great events are accentuated by excellent entertainment options. The City of Garland is home to one of the finest municipally owned golf facilities in the nation. Firewheel Golf Park, conveniently located near the I90 corridor, offers 63 holes of great golf and has gained national recognition as a PGA qualifying site. Water enthusiasts will enjoy Surf and Swim or Hawaiian Falls water parks and Lake Ray Hubbard. Garland also offers delightful dining and shopping experiences at recently developed Firewheel Town Center and Harbor Point, home to Bass Pro Shop. Garland's historic downtown district offers a great selection of specialty shops and restaurants.

Let Garland Convention and Visitors help you find the perfect location for your next event. For additional information regarding event venues and attractions in Garland, please call 972-205-2749. **D**

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Managing Your Life and KEEPING IT All Together



By Dr. Lawana Gladney
Emotional Wellness, Inc

When we think about the challenges of trying to keep it all together, it can be overwhelming. I mean, after all, there are only so many hours in the day and so much energy that you have to get things done. According to a recent article by the company Diversity @ Work, 58 percent of all employees feel that the pressure of work detracts from their family and personal life.

With that being said, the issues of work/life balance are not gender specific. Often we think that this is a topic that only affects women, but research is finding that men are challenged with balance as well. Work/life balance covers a range of workplace issues, including flexible work practices such as job sharing, telecommuting, part-time options and programs for working parents, mature-age workers and programs enabling corporate volunteerism.

When it is all said and done, there is more stuff at the end of the day than there is time. How did things get so incredibly busy? In this day of technology that is meant to make things more convenient and efficient for us, it appears as if we even have less time. When you add the hours in a day and at least one-third of the day is spent on the job, no wonder we never have enough time.

Because family and personal life can detract from work, which in turn decreases

Many companies are looking to help their employees work more efficiently by restoring balance to their lives.

productivity, many companies are recognizing the importance of this issue and are looking to help their employees work more efficiently by restoring balance to their lives. Companies are doing more to help employees by offering flexible work time and other benefits. While I am glad there is an awareness and action steps are being put in place in many industries, the change really takes place with you. How can you take control and manage your life? There are some steps that can help to restore balance and bring order to our hectic schedules.

Step One

Decide what you really want your life to look like. Ask yourself, "Am I happy with my life?" The answer to that question will determine what you need to do. If you answered, "Yes," you are way ahead of the majority of the people. That means you have actually been able to create the kind of life that you want. If you answered, "No," then you have to make some changes.

Step Two

Write down your ideal life. What would that look like? How many hours a day would you spend doing what? Of course, we all would like to spend most of our days lying in a hammock by the beach or skiing down the mountains, but try to include some productivity. For practical purposes, include a life with your current job so that we can focus on how to manage your current situation.

Step Three

Write down the current life you live. Include your job, family and other activities and how much time is spent on each one. Break it up into the number of hours/minutes spent.

Step Four

Compare your ideal life to your current life. How far are you away from your ideal life? What do you need to do to get closer to living the life you want?

This is just the beginning of the evaluation process. In order to balance and manage your life it requires constant adjustments. It is worth the daily effort, in order for you to live your best life.

The **STRESS** of Safety

By Stephen Harvill
Creative Ventures

During a recent business meeting I sat with three regional vice presidents of a major company as we prepared to launch a strategic platform I had helped them design. We had finished all the preliminary work, and all that was left was to start. One of the VPs asked me, "Are you sure this will work?" It made me pause, not out of a lack of confidence in the plan, but at the somewhat absurd aspect of the question. I answered, "Of course I'm not sure it will work, but I believe the core idea is both sound, simple and will have a positive impact on your company. If you are looking for surety, here is what I AM sure of: do nothing, and nothing will change. Doing nothing will maintain your treasured 'way things are.' Doing something will change things."

The constant need for assurance in the implementation of an idea is creating a world where we limit risk to the point of avoidance. It's a world in which we know we need to change, but remain grasped by the fear of something different. This is one of the core breeding grounds of

stress. What I don't know scares me, what scares me starts the stress process. This is a BAD formula!

Where does this fear come from?

Aren't we the nation that created the assembly line to make automobiles affordable to everyone? Didn't we recover from the disaster of Apollo 1's burning on a test launch pad to give Neil Armstrong the ability to put a footprint on another reality? Heck, aren't we the folks who



not what might happen, but what CAN happen.

Organizations almost always know and always desire to work toward their potential; a potential that is not a current reality but a vision of a future. These visions take courage to create, pursue and make a new reality.

Companies that do nothing, people who think the way

The constant need for assurance in the implementation of an idea is creating a world where we limit risk to the point of avoidance.

regularly change the world? The breach of the unknown is OUR territory, yet we now find ourselves shackled by the demands of everything from wet-behind-the-ears Wall Street analysts to ever-demanding clients whose only stake in the future is a return on their nickel.

I deal constantly with the unknown nature of the future. To many, this is the home of stress. Designing and launching strategic initiatives is a business of tomorrow, a business of what can happen,

they thought yesterday, have little hope of anything different. They commit themselves to a diet of stress. They instinctively know this, and despite their best intentions as they struggle to take the tentative step into something new, they fear a lack of surety in the outcome. When we are blessed with the opportunity to play a roll of the dice on a risk-filled step forward, sometimes we need to take it!

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So, are you interested in thinking about a new stress-free tomorrow for your organization and clients? Here are a few of the new battlegrounds for you to set up your cannons of tomorrow:

New-Age Communication

Still queasy about risk? Open the communication flood gates and let the information out! If you are not asking your customers about what you do, about the value they derive from your relationship, what you should stop/start doing; you are missing the boat. Find ways to stretch out beyond your traditional communication models. Sure, you have a Website, but

Creating collaboration is scary, exhilarating and transformational.

when was the last time you thought about updating it? How many blogs do you write, and how many are you connected to? Do you know what a podcast is? Jump on the 21st century "soft touch" train and expand your sphere of influence.

Throw It Out There!

Want the mother of all risk taking ventures? Try throwing a problem that

you have out to a team. Put together a small team charged with providing three new solutions to the problem. Creating collaboration is scary, exhilarating and transformational.

The Indigo Girls in their great song, *Closer I Am to Fine*, told of the mindset that stays still:

Darkness has a hunger that's insatiable / And lightness has a voice that's hard to hear / I wrapped my fear around me like a blanket. / I sailed my ship of safety till I sank it.

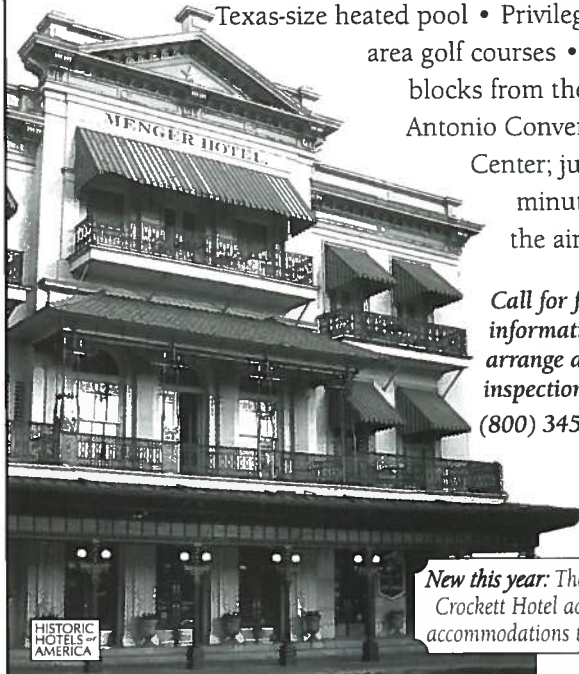
Am I sure it will work? Nope. But I am sure sitting still will fill YOUR boat. A new way is often the only way. ▀

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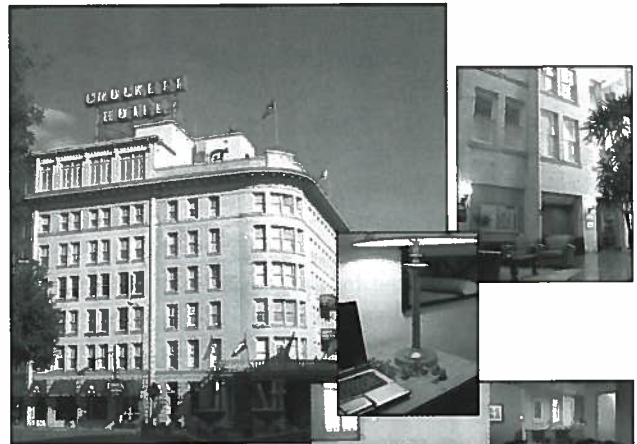
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Cause **MARKETING**

A Simple Way to Stand Out from Your Competition and Become Emotionally Connected With Your Customers and Prospects



By Kristie Vento
inChorus Marketing & Promotion

Proctor & Gamble (P&G) generated extreme buzz in 2005 when, in support of Breast Cancer Awareness, it created on-site promotion by staging mobile mammography clinics at minority-frequented grocery stores throughout Texas. The campaign at the time was credited as one of the best Cause Marketing promotions in its class. It was developed to reach the highest impacted Breast Cancer demographic, Hispanic women, who may not otherwise have access to clinical exams due to cost and lack of insurance to cover it. This is only one example of an organization's ability to step outside the promotional box and create a unique experience that brought direct value to its prospects, while increasing sales of its in-store products by giving a direct benefit to its product buyers. In fact, P&G reported a 20 percent increase in sales of in-store products during the time of this promotion, in the stores at which the mobile stations were staged.

Now, we've all been associated with organizations that engage in philanthropic efforts, but there truly is a difference between Cause Marketing and Corporate Giving. Cause Marketing or cause-related marketing refers to a type of marketing involving the cooperative efforts of a "for profit" business and a non-profit organization for mutual benefit. This is not

to be confused with "philanthropy" which typically involves a tax deduction due to a donation made. Corporate Giving (philanthropy) generally involves a specific donation that is tax deductible, while Cause Marketing is a marketing relationship generally based on joint promotion.

Cause-related marketing/event campaigns can help drive purchases, build brand image and strengthen the emotional connections that customers feel for a brand. When customers feel emotionally connected to your brand, they are far more likely not only to buy from you, but to buy from you in a long-term relationship. At the end of the day, whether you are peddling a product, a service or a stellar event, you must make an emotional and sensory connection with your audience, so that you can forge these long-term relationships.

Research has given us some great insight in the world of Cause Marketing, so as you are embarking on this trend and bringing the emotion back to your events, consider these research study findings when putting your campaign together.

Locality is a factor, as supporters feel better about the personal relevance and benevolence associated with helping an entity in their own community.

The type of product is significant. Charity incentives work significantly better with pleasure-oriented products that are perceived as frivolous – such as chocolate or an item of indulgence like a travel package, than with task-oriented products that are perceived as practical like household items and things that we "need."

Know your audience and select the cause that resonates. Be sure to engage in an effort that your public is most willing to support. The LBG Research Institute,

a research firm dedicated to conducting studies in community investment, published a report in January that highlighted the top causes the community wishes to support in 2009. The list is in the order of significance:

1. Environmental causes
2. Basic shelter such as food and clothing
3. Education
4. Health-related causes

In marketing, we have terms and trends tossed our way on a regular basis, and it can often be difficult to siphon the tools that are most relevant to our efforts. However, if we follow the basic steps of knowing our public, knowing what is important to them, and parlaying their need to support their community, we can create marketing campaigns, promotions and events that will reach our publics in a way that garners an emotional commitment to our brands. You may also find that you are standing out from your competition in a way that reaches far beyond pricing. And, if you toss in a heaping dose of social media to create buzz around this effort, you might just have a recipe for success. ▀

Know your audience and select the cause that resonates. Be sure to engage in an effort that your public is most willing to support.

MAN vs. OFFICE: The Training CLASS

Training is a critical component of our business. We need to find ways to do things better, faster and smarter. Yet, it is the WAY that we are trained that requires an inside look.

As we enter the training room, at the front is “instructor dude or dudette” fiddling with a flip chart or data projector. Then, they tap on the table and are ready to conduct their orchestra (us!) with a “Fine Point Bullet Tip White Board Marker.” He tells a quick, humorous, animated story about a fishing trip he took three years ago and shares intricate details about a three-hour battle of wills with a gigantic blue marlin. He’s had weeks, years even, to prepare his intro. For one of us, we will have had 10 seconds. Because now he wants US to share a few tidbits...



By Dave Fleming
Man vs. Office

We sit at tables in a horseshoe shape, fidgeting like kindergartners on the first day of school, doing everything in our power to avoid eye contact with the instructor. What we want to know is simple: Is this guy going to pick the person to the right, or the person to the left to go first?

Oh, the pressure on the person who goes first. They have to be funny – RIGHT NOW. They came to this class to be trained, not to perform and get laughs. What if they tell a joke and all we hear are crickets? That person will get ZERO out of the training session because of the crickets. And as the first person is going, the rest of us are quickly dreaming up something to say. And we are privately hoping that the intro of the person before us is merely average (we don’t want failure, but we sure don’t want someone to “kill” either).

The other thing that adds significant distraction is the agenda. Because you better believe we enjoy following along with the incredibly specific times that are associated with each topic. We are especially concerned with the timing of critical agenda items with one word titles like “break” or “lunch.” If it looks like we are running long on topics that lead up to breaks and lunch, count on us having the attention span of a 7-year-old at Toys ‘R’ Us. The agenda page also



serves as our special canvas – it gives us the chance to color. Throughout the day, when things drag a bit, we will color in the Os on the agenda. And if we get desperate for something to do, we'll even fill in that little top part of the lower case "e."

We love watching trainer dude conduct the class and wield that marker – when he wants to really make a point, he will double or triple underline a word. Or, better yet, he completes two underlines with one color, then transfers to another color for two more. But, if this point is so critical that the world as we know it may end if the class does not learn it...the conductor pulls out his final, most expressive move. He circles the word, not once, not twice, but 300 times, so that we cannot see the word now and he has ripped through three layers of flip charts.

While we enjoy going to training classes and are there to seek knowledge, if the class can end a little early, there will be zero complaints from us. If it's looking like we are ahead on the agenda, we'll shut it down. Instructor dude will ask, "Any questions?" and we shake our heads violently back and forth like a pitcher shaking off a sign from the catcher. Then we all stare down the chatty person who loves to hear himself talk, mouthing, "Don't you dare."

Of course, all training classes end in the same manner, with an evaluation form, name optional. The jokesters sign it "Fred Flintstone," the paranoid leave it blank, and the office braggers sign it with their real name so they get credit (you better believe I was there). We all fill out every evaluation form the same way. On a five-point scale, we circle 4 for the first item, then 4 for the next question, then 4, then 4 again, and just so every one of them isn't a 4, we give the last one a 3 or a 5 depending on how good the class was.

So, how do you avoid these training class distractions? Here are four survival tips:

1. Come Prepared

If there is homework or a pre-read, review it so you are ready to get the most out of the class. And if you don't enjoy speaking in front of a group, practice a short intro to put yourself at ease, because you know the request is coming.

2. Be Focused

You will get out of it what you put into it. If you are constantly checking your BlackBerry, coming back late from breaks, or busily doing other work that needs to get done, why did you bother showing up in the first place?

3. Define Success

Before attending the class, prepare a list of questions/outcomes you need fulfilled by the end of the class. If the entire list is not covered, ask the instructor for a few minutes after class. They should be

happy to help you as they want all attendees to get the most out each session.

4. Compare Notes

Our time and money is sacred. Ask for a list of past attendees from your industry. If a company is unwilling to provide such a list, you may not want to sign up. And, if you think the class was extremely worthwhile, offer yourself as a reference so you can help others make good training choices.

Follow these steps, and the office jungle will be much less imposing. ▀

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EASY Money



Real Ways to Deliver Real Results on Half the Budget



By Stacey Krizan-Ruth
The WOW Factory

In Knoxville, Tenn., a director of marketing and his team are responsible for budgeting, planning and delivering an annual 400-person Dealer Meeting – except this year his company felt that the January event would better serve the company's interests if it were moved permanently to a December time frame. In 2008, the year of the transition, the event will be held twice: once in mid-January and once in early December. The catch, as he explains it is: "I was told that I don't have any more budget for the largest

single expense in my marketing budget – and that expense is now doubled."

While this particular marketing director's situation is an extreme one, it is exactly how meeting planners and suppliers are experiencing the budget squeeze in an increasingly uncertain economy. Creating the same business impact for half the budget, is the new standard. According to *MPI's Future Watch 2008: A Comparative Outlook on the Global Business of Meetings and Events*: "Budget changes are the leading trend in 2008, placing as a top concern for three out of 10 independent planners, four out of 10 in all other planner and supplier categories."

This economic pressure has only accelerated the trend of larger corporations moving toward Strategic Meetings Management Programs (SMMP), and consolidating their meeting buying and outsourcing. According to the Corporate Meetings and Incentives survey a whopping 45 percent of respondents have begun taking SMMP steps in just the past year. These companies are building corporate savings through volume buying power.

1. Reassess the Meeting Format

- Determine the actual necessity of a live meeting and consider alternatives such as Webcasting.
- Restructure the event to be shorter by having less general session time, or fewer days.
- Select a different date pattern to leverage off-season or off-pattern rates with venues.

2. Negotiate More Effectively

- Develop an RFP process to ensure competitive pricing.
- Ask for volume discounts by building multiyear contracts with key suppliers and discounts for cash payment on-site or more rapid than normal payment schedules.

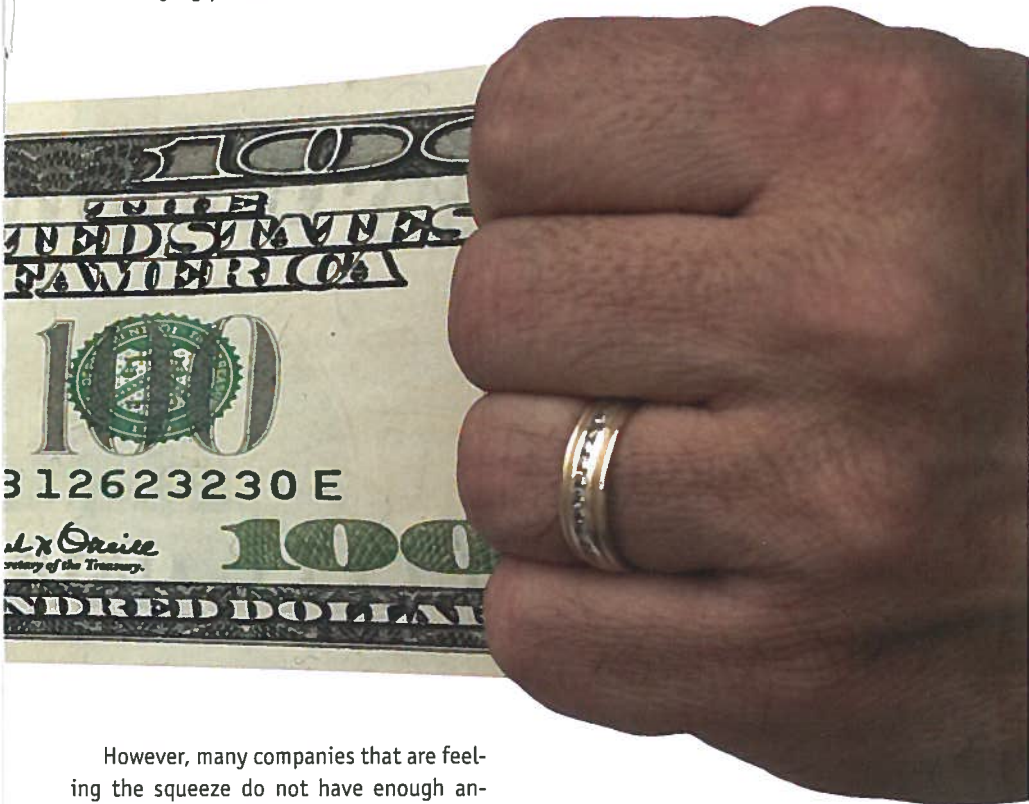
3. Manage OVERRUNS

- Plan to limit labor overtime when building your agenda.
- Meet with the hotel daily to review the master account.
- Review all invoices carefully and check the math.

Many meeting planners are finding that sometimes what looks like an additional cost on the surface can actually be a long-range cost savings. Hiring an experienced resource like a talent buyer or agent who can locate up-and-coming acts that are often a fraction of the cost of more recognizable talent can save time and money, even when their agency fee is included.

Lavon Lacey of Lavon Lacey's Quantum Events and Entertainment suggests: "There are a lot of speakers out there who are not a name, but are really excellent. I advise my clients to look at the meeting content for speakers. Sometimes an up-and-coming author is a perfect fit. For instance, if an audience is mostly baby boomers, there a lot of folks who appeal to them, but are not in as high demand – at a fraction of the cost."

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However, many companies that are feeling the squeeze do not have enough annual volume of meetings and incentives to see any noticeable benefit from an SMMP, like the director of Marketing in Knoxville. Instead, these companies are desperately searching for alternative resources that can help them do more for less – one meeting at a time. They realize there are traditional meeting elements that might need to be eliminated or scaled back dramatically. This can have an impact on attendee perception and experience – something many companies are not eager to do, especially with employees already feeling the economic angst in wage freezes and sales downturns.

Therefore, the question more and more meeting planners are facing is how to trim the extras from a meeting that had very few unnecessary extras to begin with. There are three basic approaches to this extreme meeting re-dux:

Ways to Save

Sponsors

- 1) Seek sponsorships in all areas. Ask the site facility to sponsor parking, welcome banners, conference buttons or a complimentary glass of wine at the opening reception. Look to industry sponsors for key receptions, banquets etc., but also consider unusual sources of funding.
- 2) Be open to sponsorships of in-kind products and services.
- 3) Seek meeting co-sponsors. Join forces with a complementing organization.

Site Selection

- 4) Get the local convention and visitors' bureau to do the legwork in setting up your site visit.
- 5) Consider:
 - a) Economy hotels. Do you really need to stay at a 5-star property?
 - b) Airport hotels and all-suite properties.

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Ways to Save

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- c) College and university campuses.
 - d) Unusual venues: public spaces, art galleries, and historical sites.
 - e) Movie theaters: serve traditional movie foods and take advantage of natural acoustics and tiered seating.
- 6) Use local destinations; smaller cities often offer more for your money.

Negotiations and Contracts

- 7) Know the value of your business. Keep a detailed history of all your events.
- 8) Always give conservative room blocks.
- 9) Negotiate the sliding scale rates.
- 10) Negotiate no deposit, or that the deposit will be placed in an interest-bearing account.
- 11) Use leverage. Have several supplier options and don't let the supplier think they are the only one.
- 12) Prepare a very detailed request for proposal. Communicate the value of your meeting. Ask for everything and anything that you want right up front, including:
 - a) 1 per 30 or 1 per 40 complimentary rooms.
 - b) Complimentary airport transfers.
 - c) Complimentary meeting space, rehearsal space and set-up/take-down days.
 - d) Continental breakfast in your meeting room.
 - e) Extended-stay rates.
 - f) Free local calls, office space and parking.
 - i) Late cut-off date and / or same rate after cut-off date.
 - j) Overset for food guarantees.
 - k) Reduced speaker and staff room rates.
 - l) Upgrades for VIPs and staff.
- 13) Work with the hotel to fill their "hot dates," fill in their meeting space "holes."
- 14) Make sure that any cancellation clause is reciprocal.
- 15) Keep in mind that hotels are more willing to negotiate if you use a proportional amount of rooms and meeting space. If you can, build up their F&B totals with on-site meals and functions.
- 16) Be flexible with your arrival and departure patterns.
- 17) Get all the charges listed in writing up front; and then add a 'no additional charges' clause.
- 18) Specify the dates and times in the contract i.e.: "The cut-off date for sleeping room reservations is Saturday, June 28, 2010 at 5 p.m."
- 19) Lock in the menu prices.

Food and Beverage

- 20) Be very tight with your guarantees. Use your historical data; place conservative estimates and track your delegates' preferences and patterns closely.

- 21) Do your homework. Compare all the pricing options on a spreadsheet.
- 22) Be honest: Give the banquet manager your budget and work with the chef to come up with menus that work with your group and the budget. Don't use the set menus, except as a guideline.
- 23) Order reduced portions.
- 24) Centralize your break service.
- 25) Order as much as possible by consumption. Unconsumed foods and drink can sometimes be returned and not charged. This works well with bottled or canned beverages and packaged foods like chips or granola bars, but can also be done with perishables like whole fruits or individual yogurts.
- 26) Use tickets: Collect tickets from attendees as they are seated at meals. This will make your guarantees more accurate.
- 27) Instead of a hot breakfast, do an extended continental breakfast by adding fresh fruit, yogurt and cereal.
- 28) Plated meals are generally cheaper than buffet style, due to the need to supply more food for a buffet.
- 29) Hold a vegetarian luncheon.
- 30) If you have several dinners at the same time, try to have the same menu. This way, you are more flexible with your guarantees (i.e.: an over-guarantee in one room can offset an under-guarantee in another room) and the hotel may eliminate the minimum service labor charges.
- 31) Give out meal vouchers instead of having a closing lunch or dinner.
- 32) Skip the dessert, salad or soup. Dessert can be served at a break.
- 33) Distribute box lunches instead of having a formal sit-down meal to increase networking.
- 34) Ask what other menus are being served at the same time for a different group: you may be able to have the same menu and gain economies of scale in a lower overall cost.

Bar and Beverages

- 35) Cut the cocktail time short by 15 minutes.
- 36) Combine the bars 15 minutes early, so that you only have one bar at closing. This will also reduce the potential over-time charges.
- 37) Use a controlled pour system. Make sure the bartenders are measuring what they are pouring. Be clear about how strong the drinks should be. If you are being charged by the drink served, you may find a liberal ice policy and weaker drinks in general. If you are charged by the bottle, the mixed drinks may be able to "put hair on one's chest."

Ways to Save

- 38) Do an inventory before and after the reception. Have the bartender sign the sheet personally. Also watch for empty bottles at the start of the event; they may accidentally be included in the bottles consumed count.
- 39) Crunch your numbers to determine which of the options is better: by the person, by the drink, by the bottle. Be clear about what "by the bottle" means. If a bottle is opened to pour 1 ounce, do you get charged for a full bottle or a percentage of the bottle?
- 40) Eliminate the hard liquor and mixed drinks. Have only soda, mineral water, juices, beer and wine.
- 41) Provide champagne and soda at the entrance instead of wine at dinner and serve iced tea or lemonade instead of soda at breaks.
- 42) Use leftover wine in the president's suite or hospitality rooms.
- 43) Ask hotelier if there is a discontinued wine label that can be consumed at a reduced rate.
- 44) Instead of providing coffee, ask the hotel to sell coffee at kiosks in the halls.

Cocktails

- 45) Your room set-up will affect the consumption:
 - a) If your buffet table is against a wall, it will only offer half the consumption space of a buffet table in the center of the room.
 - b) If your buffet table is far from the door, fewer people will eat because they will take longer to work their way to the food.
 - c) If you have fewer buffet tables, there also will be fewer opportunities to fill up. But watch for long waits. You do not want to frustrate your invitees, nor, do you want to appear cheap where perceived value counts most.
- 46) Use smaller plates or only have napkins available.
- 47) Place expensive items in harder-to-reach places on the banquet table.
- 48) Entice with a dessert buffet so meal consumption is lower.
- 49) Manned food stations with stir fry stops and tables piled high with steaming fresh pasta are crowd-pleasers, inexpensive and filling.
- 50) Have a smaller variety of foods but in larger quantities. Everyone likes to have a little bit of everything. If you have 50 items, the plates will get overloaded. The result: a lot of wasted food.
- 51) If you pass the food, you can extend it longer and control the portions.
- 52) Decorate the buffet table with fillers which can include food items like parsley, lettuce and ice; or decor such as props, marbles, balloons, ice carvings, and mirror tiles.

It can also simply be a matter of creating height and different levels of serving space. It will look nicer, but you will have less food on display to consume.

- 53) People will eat less if their attention is diverted with entertainment, activities and décor.
- 54) Serve cold platters on the buffet and replenish the passed hot items periodically.
- 55) Avoid shrimp, oysters and other expensive delicacies.

Room Set-Ups

- 56) Find out which group is in the hotel immediately prior to or following your meeting and work together on your staging requirements. This may save you money in labor for set-up and tear-down.
- 57) Communicate all your meeting and set-up needs to the convention services manager well in advance.
- 58) Reduce the number of breakout rooms needed.
- 59) Make sure the pads and pencils are complimentary.
- 60) Hold a pre-convention meeting. Run through all the details: Sometimes there will be a misunderstanding, and it is better to clear it up before the program begins.
- 61) Use the same room with two set-ups: For example, use classroom style for the session and banquet style in the same room for the lunch and breaks. Use plants or screens to divide the space.

People Transport

- 62) While negotiating for your convention hotel, request complimentary limousine service for VIPs to and from the hotel. Also inquire about reserved and complimentary parking.
- 63) Establish a travel policy that requires travelers to purchase the least expensive, non-refundable airfares.
- 64) Bring demographics to the table when negotiating air carriers. Would a seniors discount be better than the convention rate for your particular group?
- 65) Time arrivals of delegates within a four- to eight-hour window to cut back on bus transfer costs.
- 66) Send delegates local transit information: Travel by bus, commuter train or subway for much less. Many cities have airport transportation.
- 67) Ask the local taxi company for sightseeing coupons.
- 68) Use the carrier's VIP lounge for the group's meet and greet.
- 69) Use restaurants within walking distance.
- 70) Travel during off-peak hours (early morning or late evening).
- 71) Explore luggage truck rentals versus per piece luggage handling charges.
- 72) Book hotels that provide a complimentary airport-shuttle service.

This approach of hiring experienced resources for an additional fee in order to save money long-term also holds true when outside meeting planners or planning companies are involved. These companies can seem like an added expense for a little convenience, but many companies are finding that the monetary benefits of a well-negotiated contract can save tens of thousands of dollars on a single event. For companies that must negotiate venue contracts on their own, we have included a list of venue contract negotiation points, courtesy of Corbin Ball and Associates. This list is not exhaustive. The art of negotiation is building the win-win that is customized to both the venue and the group.

A very general rule of thumb for meeting budgets is that one-third of the budget is for travel and lodging, one-third is for food and beverage, and one-third is for creative and production. Including the suppliers in the battle to beat the budget and making it a collaborative endeavor is

a cost-saving method that is sometimes overlooked. Felicia Newberry, Magnum Productions, says building events with a client over time can have many areas of built-in savings that are often overlooked if a production partner is not included in the planning early in the process.

"The first thing that I would do is make sure that even if the meetings are going to be in different cities they are in similar venues," Newberry says. "For example, you would want a ballroom with the same type of setup, like air wall track and rigging policies so that you could use the same type of equipment and setup.

"If your production company has produced the job before," Newberry continues, "they can be more competitive on your second event, because they are familiar with the project and have worked out the kinks. Again, if budget is a major issue I would pick my cities very strategically."

Newberry also recommends using the same venue for the closing


party. "That way you could redirect some lights and other equipment as opposed to loading and unloading to a different venue," she says. "Also, I would look at using an automated/LED lighting package. This lighting is flexible in that you can program different looks so the room can look different, and it will help you out on the power and labor cost."

Two items that often can suffer in the scramble to cut already lean costs are quality and content. Cutting back on speaker rehearsals, breaks, doubling up on rooms and a number of other cost-cutting measures can backfire when it comes to attendance, not to mention information retention. Some of the often overlooked benefits of meetings are the soft benefits of networking, sharing best practices and motivation of attendees. Whatever cost savings make sense, if a live experience cannot be replaced by a Webcast, the experience itself is paramount to the event's success. ▀



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I am CMP

Karen Fogle, CMP
Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau
Plano, Texas



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I enjoy bringing meetings to Plano, but I adore keeping up with all my “children,” including my biological son and eight foreign exchange students.

CMP designees represent the top 12 percent of all meeting planners who plan meetings, conventions and events throughout the United States and around the world. Currently, 12,549 professionals in 35 countries and territories across the globe have the advanced training and experience required to be called a Certified Meeting Professional (CMP). Working with a CMP assures the client that they are aligning with a true professional.

DALLAS/FORT WORTH
CHAPTER

MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

To learn more about obtaining your Certified Meeting Professional designation contact www.conventionindustry.org.

Have You NOTICED?



By Marti Fox, CMP, CMM
GlobalGoals, Inc

Have you noticed that every time you open your Internet browser, a magazine or the newspaper that "GREEN" is the latest hot topic? There is a good reason for this: we need to protect and create a better world around us. But we need to think BIGGER. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not a trend, it is a movement. So, we need to get on board with CSR.

What is Corporate Social Responsibility?

MPI defines it as the recognition that an organization is inextricably intertwined with society and the earth and must take responsibility for its actions in regard to the "triple bottom line" of people, planet and profit. Not only do responsible approaches help build brand and reputation, they help strengthen the community and, therefore, the marketplace. A solid strategic plan, embedded into the business culture, which recognizes the importance of CSR, will help to build a sustainable and profitable future for all.

In practical terms, triple bottom line accounting means expanding the traditional reporting framework to take into account ecological and social performance in addition to financial performance.

Choose one event/project and critically review the ecological and social impact of the processes currently in use and evaluate the bigger ramifications.

The phrase was coined by John Elkington in 1994. It was later expanded and articulated in his 1998 book *Cannibals with Forks: the Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*. Sustainability, itself, was first defined by the Brundtland Commission of the United Nations in 1987.

"Exchanging Ideas to Connect the World" is the theme for the 2008-09 D/FW Chapter term, and your Chapter has created a CSR committee to offer ongoing CSR ideas and strategies that you can bring to your workplace and life. If we each do something extra to encourage CSR in our communities, then we can contribute to a better global future.

We cannot just change the entire mindset of our world in a day, week or month; it requires us to take small steps that grow into great strides.

How Do I Begin?

Choose one event/project and critically review the ecological and social impact of the processes currently in use and evaluate the bigger ramifications.

To help you review your event, refer to the MPI D/FW CSR Committee's "Meeting & Event CSR Standards Checklist" in the CSR

Committee's section on our MPI/DFW Chapter's Website.

'I Do Not Have Time To Do This!'

To be a responsible person in today's world, we do not have the luxury of not doing this, if even on a small scale. So try these steps to get started:

1. Find an event you are working on in the future. Do not try to "re-make" an eminent project because you may become frustrated with the process of approval to make changes and the snowball effect of the changes.
2. At the next meeting of the stakeholders, put the topic of CSR on the agenda.
 - a. First ask them what "green" or CSR efforts are being done currently and whether their organization has a favorite charity



(i.e. literacy, children, etc.) that is part of their corporate policy or preference. Sometimes HR is already putting procedures in place and the staff/employees aren't even aware of it yet. Piggybacking on these existing policies at the event/program builds continuity.

- b. Next, be prepared with some ideas to present in order to get the creative ideas flowing.
3. Assign willing team members to research three ideas and report their findings as to feasibility and financial impact at the next meeting.
4. Discuss which, if not all, can be incorporated in to your event. Add them to the project timeline so they do not get put off to the end and ultimately "dumped" because of a time crunch.
5. Obtain the buy-in of your vendors and sponsors. They may even have ideas to elevate the CSR ideas to greater levels.
6. Promote your CSR efforts at the event. Acknowledge areas of CSR efforts in the program, at the podium, on the screen, on the buffet tables, anywhere where your team has shown responsibility.
7. Recognize your CSR efforts and contributors in post-event news (company newspaper, weekly e-mail bulletins, bulletin board, Website with pictures, etc)
8. Share with other MPI members on our Website by sending pictures and a brief summary about your best effort this year to neva@ah-awardpro.com.

How Do I Continue?

Go beyond one event/project and incorporate CSR into all your projects.

Next, evaluate your business and critically review the ecological and social impact of the current processes and determine the bigger ramifications. Then, follow the same steps above to obtain your new CSR goals.

Watch for more CSR ideas coming in the future from your DFW/MPI Chapter. In the meantime, as Mahatma Gandhi once said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

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HOUSTON AREA CHAPTER

MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

The entire Houston Area Chapter of MPI would like to thank the MPI Dallas/Ft. Worth Chapter for their support during the recovery of Ike.

Hurricane Ike rolled through Galveston, Houston and north through Texas after making its landfall during the early morning hours of September 13th, in Baytown Texas. Hurricane Ike was the third most destructive hurricane to ever make landfall in the United States. It was the ninth named storm, fifth hurricane and third major hurricane of the 2008 Atlantic hurricane season. It was blamed for many deaths and over \$31.5 billion in total damages and it greatly affected the Galveston/Houston area residents, companies our MPI members and the local hospitality industry.

Today, the residents and businesses in the Galveston/Houston area are still in recovery but there is great hope we will very soon resume our normal lives and many already have. It is because of our caring neighbors and colleagues like you that we continue to find inspiration and hope.

The urgent support of \$2000 in Ike relief provided by the Dallas/Ft. Worth Chapter of MPI was so giving and we are extremely grateful. Two of our industry Galveston-based families were able to start rebuilding their lives because of your thoughtfulness to start an Ike relief effort and because your members selflessly gave donations. Your support will not be forgotten.

from the bottom of our hearts
Thank you

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HOTELS & CONFERENCE CENTERS

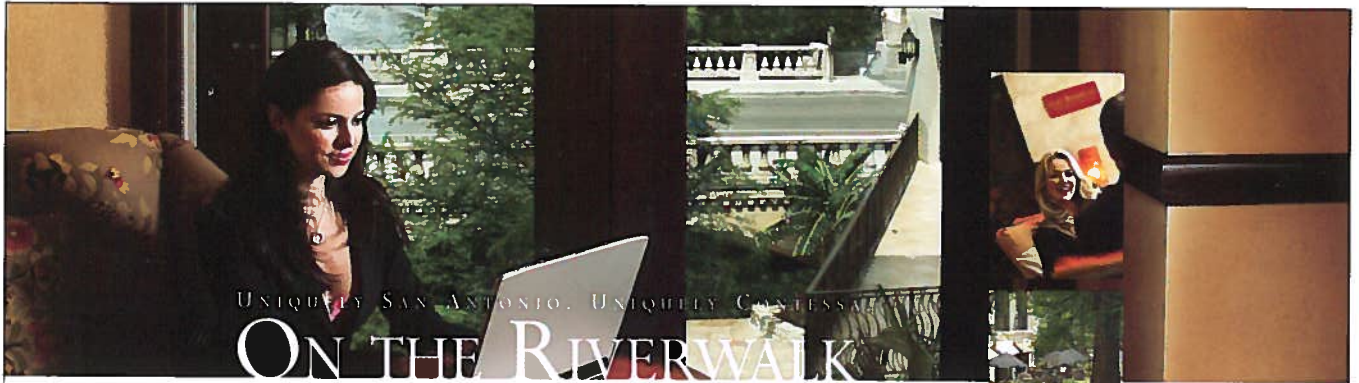
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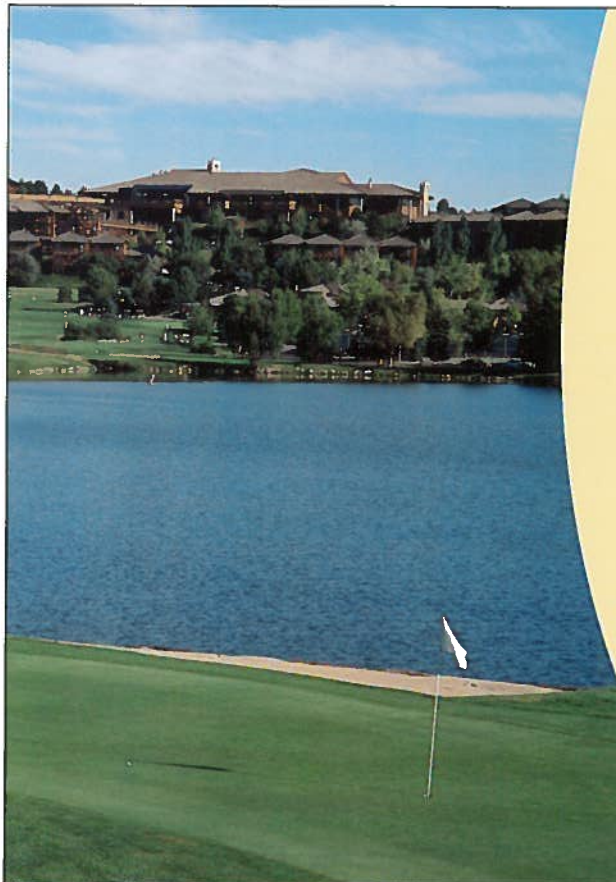
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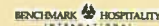
- Buy 3-night package, get 4th night free
- Buy 3 rounds of golf, get the 4th free
- 15% discount for on-site AV package
- 15% discount for on-site recreation activities
- Hosted beer, wine and soda reception for group



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*Based on availability. New contracts only. Program must be contracted by 12/31/08. Cannot be combined with any other discounts or offers.

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