

## WEC 2014

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MPINCC Scholarship Winner

WEC: What I did this summer

As a first timer attending WEC in Minneapolis, I was both excited and nervous –just like a kid going away to camp. I never went away to summer camp so I will have to rely on late 70's summer movies.

I exited the plane in Minneapolis airport, claimed my bag and was immediately lost – but not for long. I was greeted by the MPI Welcome committee manning the WEC information booth. I was directed to the taxi station and headed to my cabin, Hilton Minneapolis.

On Sunday morning, WEC attendees gathered in the auditorium in the Minneapolis Convention Center. The opening ceremony resembled Camp Olympics. Each MPI chapter marched into the auditorium as a team waving their chapter sign high and proud. The high energy music mastered by DJ Splyce encouraged a massive instant dance party. The Meet Minneapolis hosts and the Brave New World Performers welcomed everyone in a humorous skit highlighting the stereotypes of Minnesota natives. And with motivating words from MPI Chairman of the Board, Kevin Kirby, WEC kicked off and attendees exited the auditorium dancing and ready to get the most of this experience.

Over the next few days, I attended several productive, eye-opening education sessions and quick “camp fires” on various areas including RFP pitfalls, cross-culture negotiations, and event contingency planning. Each session fostered open discussions, shared experiences and many a-ha moments.

Sunday came to a close with the amazing speaker, Deepak Chopra, MD. He advised an auditorium of meeting professionals to “never multi-task” and was answered with a wave of skeptical laughter. He explained when we multi-task, we do not give 100% focus on one task. Dr. Chopra discussed the importance of “well-being” meeting function spaces and introduced MGM Resorts Stay Well Meetings. He stated, “You must feel refreshed after every meeting.” When he finished, Dr. Chopra received a well-deserved standing ovation.

WEC also offered fun activities with the MPI WEC mobile app that challenged attendees to earn points by posting WEC pictures and tweeting updates. I represented MPINCC and won top RETWEETER, beating out my new Twitter friends! And I must mention my favorite activity, Puppy Cuddling, a booth full of local, loving dogs ready for petting. It was a quick fix to my case of homesickness.

Each night offered networking opportunities, Tweet-ups, and industry parties like the spectacular MPI Rendezvous Party.

So much to do, before I knew it, we were on our last day of WEC. The main event was the WEC 2015 San Francisco Preview Luncheon with Steve Wozniak. I didn't realize how homesick I was until I entered the room and saw all the rotating slides of great San Francisco views and the beautiful decorations – Golden Gate centerpieces with Rice-a-roni boxes. Listening to all the music hits by local SF artists. The buzzing grew louder as attendees claimed a table and then, the fog rolled in and the buzz stopped as “The Woz” was introduced. He shared his Bay area experiences, “I will never forget the music notes I heard from my first concert at the Fillmore. Events like that shaped my life”. In the end, SF Travel and Steve Wozniak “sell” San Francisco well. The luncheon attendees, including me, were talking about next year's WEC, visiting San Francisco and meeting up with everyone. And I was homesick again.

Like camp, I returned home with a few mosquito bites, new skills, more friends and great memories. And like most happy campers, I can't wait till next summer, till next WEC!

Thank you MPINCC for a great summer experience!