



WESTFIELD CHAPTER

MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

PATHWAYS

2006-2007 Chapter of the Year

www.mpiwc.org

OCTOBER 2009



Why the Financial Crisis is a Wonderful

Wake Up Call

Instructions

Instructions

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Now that you have our newsletter opened.....the instructions below will assist you in navigating it more easily. If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to contact Tony Polito, Director of Publications at (203) 351-1860 or email him at tony.polito@hilton.com.

Hints

Hints



1. Minimize Everything On Your Desktop

Your viewing experience will be heightened if you minimize every open application so the newsletter is sitting directly on your desktop with nothing behind it but your wallpaper.

2. Center On Your Screen

If you cannot see the black navigation bar at the bottom of the newsletter, drag the newsletter to the top (or center) of your screen so you can see the entire newsletter.

3. Advancing Pages

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Haven't registered for the November program yet? It's not too late - head over to page 8 and click on the registration banner today!

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Leadership Thoughts

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Hello Colleagues!

As President, I've decided that I'm going to give you all the opportunity to learn a bit more about the other Executive Committee members. This month, instead of hearing from me (which I am sure you are getting sick of already!), I have passed the baton to our VP of Finance, Sharon Schenk, CMP. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to me if there is anything I can do to support you.

*Heather Perrone, CMP
Chapter President 2009-2010*

Heather Perrone, CMP



Is the economic crisis the end of the world or the beginning of something wonderful? How often have you thought to yourself, "I am so tired of negative news, there's no hope left" or "How am I supposed to plan my life if I don't even know if I'll have a job tomorrow?" How about asking yourself if this might not be the perfect opportunity to reinvent yourself? Are you really happy? Do you really enjoy what you do day to day? Aren't there some aspects of your life you'd like to change but never really had the courage or opportunity to do so? This could be a time for reinvention.

Several of my colleagues and friends have been released from their jobs. Some of them have decided that their priorities were a bit out of whack. They reassessed their relationships with friends and family and decided that the next chapter of their lives would be better balanced. Some have completely changed careers and have gone after jobs that were emotionally rewarding (think "Teacher" - yikes!). Some have become more involved in giving back to their local and global communities. There needs to be a mindset change from having an identity that is tied to a company to having an identity of individualism and being who we are as people, not as employees.

This economic crisis has provided many of us with an opportunity to reassess our values and to think about what makes us happy. It may sound selfish but I think if reassessing who we are (spouse, friend, brother, sister, daughter, neighbor) makes us excited to start a new day and adds balance to our lives, we can only be better people in the end. And that makes it a better world for everybody!

Upcoming Event

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Looking Ahead to our November Program

by Judy Stern
Director, Professional Development

There is no denying that this past year has been a difficult time for meeting planners and the hospitality industry! How long are you going to let the doom and gloom messages from media, friends and colleagues control your well being?

According to Andy Feld, our keynote speaker and author of "Wake up, Life is Calling", our life is like a blank canvas and we are the artists that create the picture. We all have choices.

The November 11th luncheon and education program will be held at the Hilton Stamford Hotel & Executive Meeting Center beginning at 12 noon.



Who does not want to be happy and who does not want to manifest their every dream? What keeps us from happiness and why don't we always get what we want? For most of us, life experience revolves around relationships, money, health and happiness, and it can all be learned and practiced. It will be explained in a fast-paced, entertaining manner.

The MPI WestField Chapter is pleased to welcome these rays of positive thinking to our November meeting! Come and find out why and how this economic crisis may indeed be looked at as our most wonderful wake up call!



Finding Solutions In A Changing Economy

By David Gabri

President and CEO, Associated Luxury Hotels International

One of the most important decisions to make in the meetings and incentive marketplace is where to host your program. With today's more challenging economic climate, when you need to balance all of your constituencies, this decision can become more difficult than ever.

Even if your company or organization is faring well, the perception effect is that everyone should "hunker down" and be extra cautious with expenditures. While it is always wise to control costs and curb unneeded expenses, the current mindset seems to be to deliver a program with equivalent standards, but do it for less.

So here is the big challenge. How do you maintain the high-caliber of programs, attain the "Experience Expectation" of attendees, and meet in venues that substantiate the importance of the event, when executives within your organization and participants attending your programs are expecting the budget to be at the same (or even a reduced) level as last year?

Meeting Regionally Becoming More Popular

One trend we have noticed recently is that an increasing number of planners are opting for regional site solutions for their national programs. Having meetings, conventions or incentive programs closer to your organization's headquarters can often meet all expectations of a first-class program, while offering cost-savings benefit to meet budget objectives.

We are all well-aware that higher fuel prices can affect virtually everything, including air fares. By selecting a site closer to home, you can reduce overall expenses, because more attendees can reach the site by automobile or train, or can drive together.

In addition to travel cost savings, you may enjoy other benefits as more members of the headquarter's staff may be able to attend. This can contribute to motivating staff, enhancing camaraderie and the exchange of information, and providing an opportunity for them to meet their counterparts from around the nation or world.

There can also be a much-overlooked time-saving benefit for key leadership and staff away from the headquarter's office. There can even be "green" benefits, as programs conducted regionally tend to have less of a carbon footprint, since fewer individuals travel by air, and attendees may drive together or take mass transit.



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Choices Within Close Proximity

While meeting regionally isn't an option -- or the best choice -- for all programs, it can be a way to present an opportunity to save without negatively impacting your meeting or incentive program. The good news is that there are many qualified solutions that can work for you as there are many exceptional offerings in each part of the country.

Depending upon your program, this may be a trend to consider as a short-term solution, as we expect to see this phenomenon continuing in 2010. Re-tooled budgets and external costs for 2010 and beyond may require planners to think in these regional terms, and planners may go back to previous rotations. But for now, this strategy can address some challenges that many planners are facing. If you need assistance determining optimal options within your region, please talk with your sales professionals in your National Sales Office. Give them a call so they can help you identify the best solutions to present to your management.



David Gabri is president and CEO of Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI), which has the national sales responsibilities to the meetings and incentive industries for its membership of over 125 premier Four- and Five-Diamond quality hotels and resorts worldwide.



What would you like to see in the next newsletter? Drop a quick note to dirpublications@mpiwc.org and let us know. We want your feedback!



Coming Attraction

Meeting Professionals International WestField Chapter

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Next Chapter Event

Why the Financial Crisis is a Wonderful

Wake Up Call

[Register](#)

November 11, 2009 | 11:30am - 2:00pm | Hilton Stamford Hotel & Executive Meeting Center

Grammar Corner

by Sharon Schenk, CMP



Interpreters convert one spoken language into another.

Translators convert written materials from one language into another.



Remember September

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Wikis, Blogs, Podcasts, Twitter, Facebook and Delicious

Oh my!

Who would have thought that delicious would describe more than just a great meal?

In a "coffee house" style setting, Jim Spellos led us through a labyrinth of networking sites introducing the "new face of the Internet". He enlightened us on how to utilize the internet more effectively and how Web 2.0 impacts how we manage our business information and relationships. Jim's easy presentation style kept the audience engaged in a subject that is constantly changing. He touched on the lingo for the latest technologies and highlighted the hottest sites. Jim provided straight-forward answers to technology questions in a friendly, fun environment. His ability to speak to all levels of expertise helped us to improve our technology quotient.

An audience of 70 people came from areas as far away as upstate NY. Diverse in their knowledge of internet capabilities, there was something to be learned by everyone.

Dolce, nestled amongst the trees in Norwalk, CT provided a perfect setting for this program. The Gathering Room lent itself perfectly to a "Fireside chat" atmosphere and the session ending with a "Delicious" buffet of foods prepared by Dolce's culinary staff.

James Spellos is the President of Meeting U., a company specializing in helping people become more productive and comfortable with technology.



Jim is certified as a Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS). He is a recognized expert in the field of technology for business professionals, delivering nearly 200 seminars annually on how to become more productive & efficient using technology applications. He is a faculty member at New York University, teaching in the School of Professional and Continuing Studies since 1990. Jim joined the undergraduate faculty in 2002.

Through Meeting U., Jim publishes a monthly technology e-letter named Techniques. This free newsletter shares technology applications and services that apply for professional and personal use.

Outside of the meetings industry, Jim is an accomplished musician and songwriter, playing guitar, keyboards and singing for the New York City rock band Contraband. They released their first CD, "Welcome to the Neighborhood" in late 2008, with all proceeds going to charity.

Publications

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Notice

Newsletter Schedule Change

by Tony Polito
Director of Publications



One of the great things about our chapter is the ease with which we acknowledge our membership's changing needs and our ability to adapt to them accordingly. Our members time is absolutely their most valuable resource and we must be cognizant of that. With that in mind, we are shifting the newsletter schedule from a monthly to a quarterly publication after this issue.

Let's paint a picture of what goes into putting this together: Someone needs to write every single article on every single page. Putting a logo or photo in is easy when you have them handed to you but someone needs to take those photos, gather those logos, resize them, store them, and then pass them on. That doesn't even get to the layout or editing portion of it. The layout is a tedious and time-consuming job, where you individually place every single text box, graphic, photo, logo, and title onto the page and link every logo. As for proofreading, we have an amazing team of proofers that make the rest of us look really good. They go through the entire newsletter letter by letter, page by page, link by link, to make

sure everything is correct in terms of look, grammar, context and that it's linked correctly. That is a huge, time-consuming job and they're amazing. When we say this is a team effort, we mean it. We could not work without the intricate layers of this machine spinning together, because each part is so reliant on the others. One person truly could not do this alone and have the quality of product that you are currently reading.

The best part is, we're all volunteers - no one is paid and some aren't even doing it for credit. We do it because we look at the finished product and take a great deal of pride in it. This is our way to give back a little bit of what we get out of being members. By going quarterly, we are going to have more time to put together an even more well-crafted journal than this current iteration. We are making the weekly news and newly-renovated chapter website more informative and timely. Our goal is to make the newsletter become a more resourceful journal offering interesting industry-relevant topics, helpful hints, member insights, and a little bit of fun stuff too.

We want you to get all that you can out of our offerings, so in that vein we need your feedback to know what you want to get out of the newsletter. If you want a game page, let us know. If you want more photos, let us know. If you want more member spotlights, let us know. You can have a say in what goes into the newsletter. Please take advantage of it.



Leadership Development

Meeting Professionals International WestField Chapter

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Another Benefit to Volunteering

By Carolyn Browning, CMP, Leadership Development Committee

There are many reasons to volunteer. Volunteering for causes can be a great way to interact with organizations you believe in and it helps others. When people join professional organizations such as MPI, various reasons are given for joining - networking, education, sales leads. In today's environment, volunteering can also be a means to finding a new job.

At the September meeting, Jim Spellos touched on some social networking tools that are available. These tools can help you reconnect with old friends and classmates, but more importantly in today's marketplace can help expand your reach to gain access to new client avenues and jobs. By joining Linked In or Plaxo, you can research new clients or prospective employers. Remember your volunteer network when asking for recommendations on these sites. Your volunteer experience can be equally as important as your "real job" experience. Volunteering gives you an opportunity to learn some new skills and hone others to improve yourself both personally and professionally.



While the new networking methods work well, "old-fashioned" networking through volunteer organizations is a tried and true way of making contacts and expanding prospects for employment and clients. As an example, our current MPIWC president, Heather Perrone, relates that she found her new job through MPI.



"As a chapter volunteer, I met David Pellon at MPIWC events and hired his company for both professional and personal functions. We developed a good working relationship and he became familiar with my work ethic and style. He also knew I had a high profile within the Chapter because of the various roles I held on the Board. After I lost my job, we were talking at the Gala, and I mentioned that I was looking at all jobs in the industry and that a sales position would be something I would consider because I always found that some of the best sales people I worked with came from the planner side and/or had their CMP. David called a few weeks later to say they were restructuring the organization and wanted me to come in to talk in more detail about a sales position he had open. When they offered me the job, they said flat out that even though I did not have any sales experience, they felt that my energy, willingness to learn and MPI contacts/relationships more than made up for it. They could teach me to be a sales person and I already had a leg up with my MPI involvement."

I'm sure there are other success stories out there and there will be more to come! Do you have a story about how your volunteerism has helped you in your professional life? Send your story to newsletter@mpiwc.org.