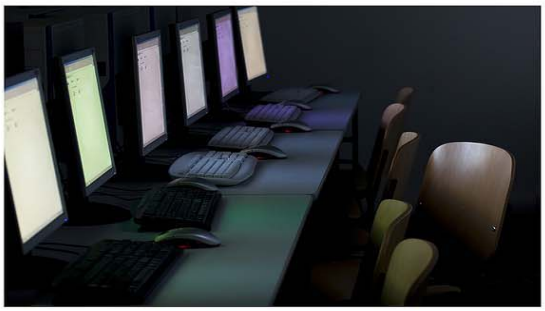
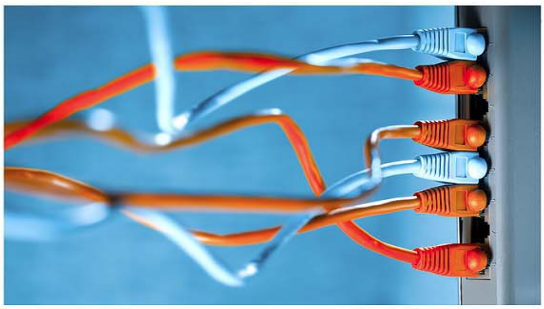
MPI MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

OHIO CHAPTER

define

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL OHIO CHAPTER





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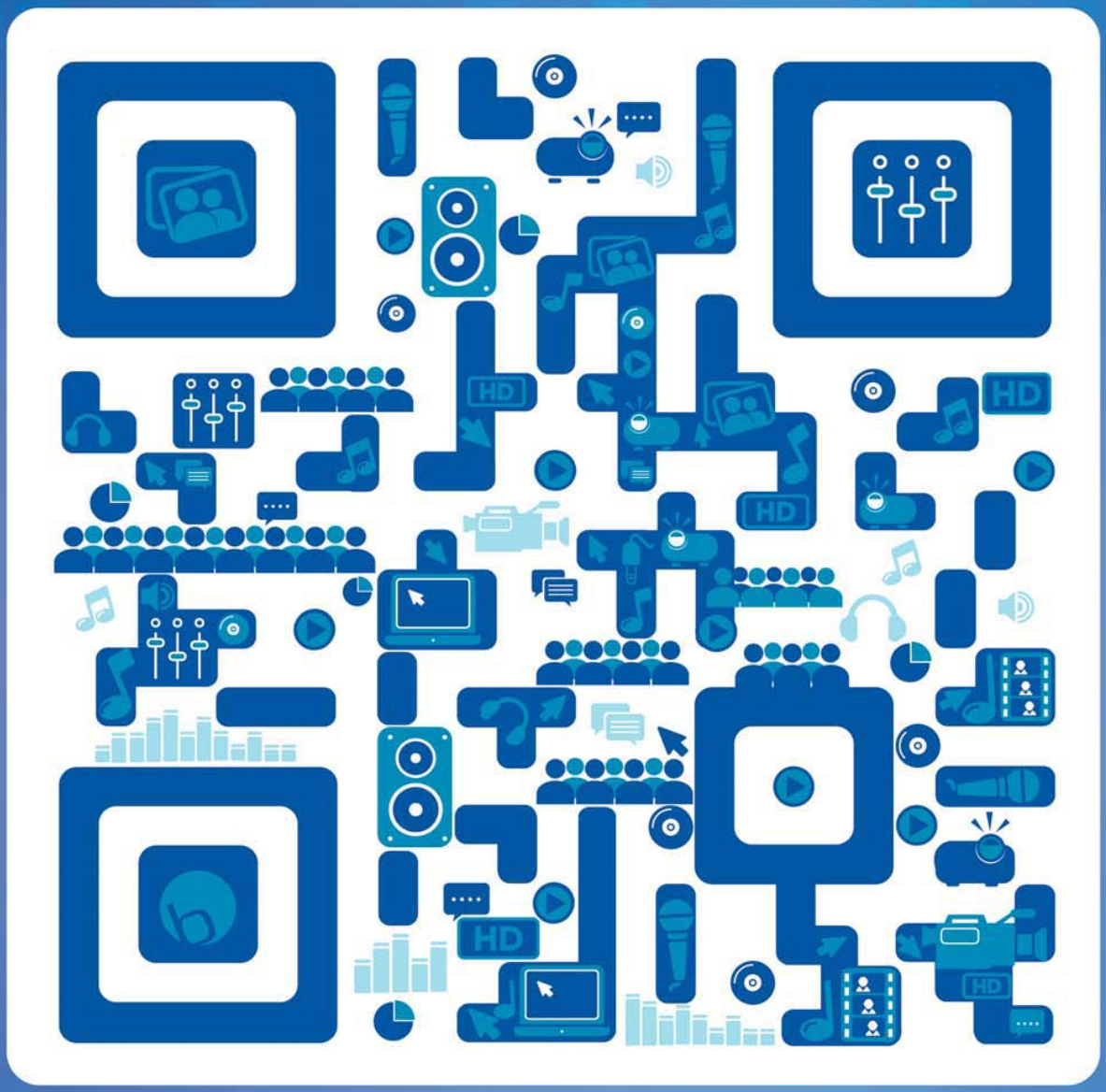

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MPIOH Mission Statement: To enhance the overall quality and awareness of the meetings industry by ensuring the professional development and growth of its membership through targeted educational programs and networking opportunities.

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President's Column

By: Barb Burgie

Connections:

As many of you may know I run a small marketing and advertising firm here in Columbus. I was graciously invited to become a member of MPI by Mary Vlahos seemingly many moons ago. It is amazing to track my tenure on the board as well as the many changes that have taken place in our society since I became a member.

One of the most amazing changes is the impact on all things internet; from social media to websites. Everything has changed and continues to change at a rapid pace that most of us have a hard time keeping up with. The amount of information that I consume in a day and the many different outlets that I use to connect with individuals, is astounding to me.

In recent months a lot of focus has been given to Social Media and I spend much of my day utilizing it for my clients to not only market, but more importantly, to brand their company. However, in my personal opinion Social Media is just one of many tools that you should be using and I think what still ranks as "most important" is the power of relationships and taking the time to get to know someone.

I don't think there is an electronic medium that over powers the opportunity to sit next to someone face to face. To learn about them, to learn from them and to connect with them creates such a different type of relationship and one that seems to stand the test of time.

As we head into the second quarter I invite each of you to think about how you want to ***connect*** and use MPI to benefit you. We have our April appreciation event which is free to all members and discounted to anyone that is not currently a member. We have our REACH meetings which provide the more intimate one-on-one time with many folks, in May we have a chapter meeting in Cleveland and in June we have our appreciation event. Not to mention we have our social media sites, group pages and our deluxe new website with a great Google Calendar— all for you!

I ask that you get involved the way that best meets your needs but I personally, look forward to seeing you at one of our many events. The connections I have made as president have helped me grow my business and provide endless resources to each one of my clients.

Demanding Tech Downtime

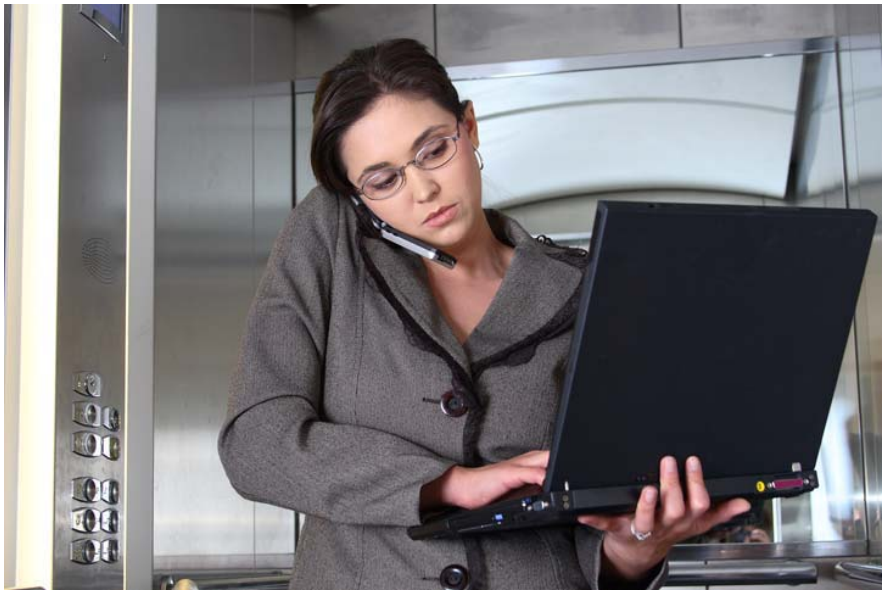
By Elizabeth Armstrong, TRS LLC

A recent 'Technical Trends' continuing education session at a regional MPI conference got a little off track.

I was discussing, in a very engaging fashion, tools for growing event image and expanding promotional punch. YouTube storytelling. QR codes for smart ticketing. Is your event location on FourSquare with tips about parking? So many exciting ideas for these event professionals.

But. It was the end of the day and the questions were taking a decidedly "tech weary" tone.

A service provider shared the story of getting a panicked call from a meeting planner at 3:45 a.m. on a matter that was far from an emergency. He asked with an exasperated look, "How do you send a customer service-friendly message clarifying when it is appropriate to call or text after week day business hours or weekends or even vacation?"



"Turn your phone off when you go to bed." The audience chimes in with suggestions. "No, when you leave the office." "Not practical, what if there really is an emergency?" "Don't you have a manager on duty?" "Are you kidding, who has that many staff anymore?"

The tall woman in the next row tackles a different privacy issue "I get friend requests from clients and colleagues on my personal Facebook page. Is it rude to ignore them?"

I've lost control of the audience and they are all ready for their turn playing Oprah. "My Facebook page is only for my close friends and family." "Doesn't that defeat the purpose? Facebook is for everyone I know." "Everyone? Aren't you afraid that your posts won't be appropriate for everyone you know." "I'm not posting anything distasteful!" "But don't you want to keep separation between your private and professional life?"

Before I can regain control of the conversation, the redheaded planner in the front added, "What about the urgent e-mails while I'm on vacation? An angry client complained that I did not understand customer service. She sent me SIX messages in two days completely ignoring my out-of-office message with directions on who to call."

The audience went wild with recommendations. Regaining the floor, I laughed that my "Top Tech Trends" session had turned into a self help program, "Ten Steps to Technical Downtime." We wrapped up and I headed back to my hotel room.

It was 9 p.m. by the time I finished my last e-mail. Leaning back I contemplated my message to a colleague asking for several items the next morning. Hmm. Do I want her to drop everything to rush through this first thing in the morning? Really?

I change the request deadline for three days later and the send order for delivery at 8:30 a.m.

Baby steps.

Hospitality Marketing Concepts + Social Media = ROI Maybe Yes, Maybe No

By De-de Mulligan, CMP, CMM

As a self-proclaimed social media consultant and expert, I am constantly amazed at the misunderstanding of social media in the C-Suite world. These highly intelligent, and might I add highly paid individuals, seem to be looking at social media through one prism equation:

(Time + Money) x Social Media = Increased Sales

While we all want this equation to work, it is as irrelevant as comparing outdoor advertising to a Pintrest bulletin board. Apples to oranges. Typewriters to tablets. You get the idea.

Now, don't get me wrong, measurement tools are good things and they can show some effectiveness of your message. However, hospitality marketing gurus and their bosses above them want to push out everything they want you to know about their property and then some. Push, push, push until the poor fan who is on your page unfriends you or worse, *blocks your messaging*. Just like interacting at a cocktail party, we **need to listen as much as we talk** on social media and stop focusing on ROI but use much more gentler, kinder measurements such as ROE (Return on Engagement) or ROC (Return on Conversation).

So, let's look at 3 things you can do to position your hotel online marketing efforts.

First, your organization has to have goals and objectives.

What is it your organization hopes to accomplish with their social media strategy? It is a-okay if increasing sales is one of the goals, but it can't be the ONLY goal. Think of it this way: The goals consist of your blueprint, the objectives are your building materials and social media are the items in your tool bag. You can't pound a nail into a 2' x 4' with a tape measure. So don't spend all your time on Facebook if your prospects are on LinkedIn. Goals might look something like this:

- Increase brand awareness gaining more likes and followers
- Write a blog twice a week dedicated to issues in the industry
- Develop a digital crisis plan for customer complaints online
- Use social media exclusively for career openings

Second, it's not all about you, it's mostly about them.

You need to have a mixture of "push" (your hotel, your specials, your promotions) and "pull" (contents, giveaways, questions, valuable information that is not brand focused, job openings). The rule of thumb in the industry is 70/30 — 70% pull and 30% push. You want your following to be downright giddy about what you are going to giveaway, offer, post, or share!

And don't even try to control the comments because a disgruntled customer will find a way to get their message out virally. Instead, respond to their complaint online and on time. Show you care and let the rest of the world know you care, too.

Third, get everyone on board, from the housekeeper to the general manager.

Stop thinking that marketing is responsible for your hotel online marketing messaging (typewriter aka old school). Start thinking that everyone is responsible for the conversation (tablet aka hipster). Train your staff on the tools and even though they might not participate in the conversation, they will know when you have one pissed off customer. Make it easy for them to respond to the guest, both face-to-face and online. Empower your staff with the proper tools and you will never regret it.

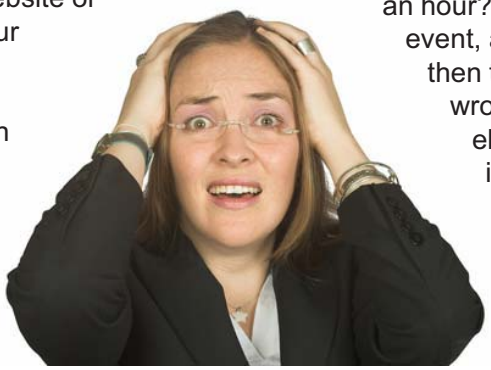
So here's my new equation:

(Time + Money) x Social Media = Brand Awareness + Business Development + Marketing Initiatives + Crisis Management + Increased Sales

Nightmare on Technology Street

By Shane Yates, CAE, CMP

Over the years in the meetings and association industry, I've had the same conversation with different people, when technology is working it can make our lives and work processes easier, more efficient, you name it; However, when it doesn't, it makes you feel like you're facing a crowd of zombies. How many times in meetings have you experienced a power outage of some sort, or an audio-visual crash? What do you do when your company website or email server crashes, bringing your productivity to a screeching halt? These are the things that all professionals should think about in order to ensure that your organization and meetings remain functional during unexpected occurrences.



Remain Calm

Without fail, every event will have its share of minor (or major) crises. Find an immediate solution while maintaining your cool. This is often the opposite of how you are feeling when you're under pressure when problems occur. In order for you to remain calm and for your brain to "think", you have to be as relaxed as possible, take deep breaths, take a second and give yourself a positive and affirming message. I often try to imagine my problem as a knot: the more I panic and pull on the ends, the tighter the knot cinches; however, when I adopt a singular focus, calm takes over and I can loosen one strand at a time.

Be Proactive

As cliché as it may sound, anticipating all the problems, thinking and acting ahead is a great method for tackling possible problems in advance to prevent them from becoming a reality. Get into the habit of taking precautions and developing fallback plans. Try to anticipate needs and problems. Experience is the best teacher, so take some time to look back at past meetings. What problems have you encountered with technology? Remember that it's only possible to anticipate so much, and be ready to react if something unexpected comes up. Being proactive means being *flexible* and anticipating problems while preparing for *all* possible outcomes.

Have Plans B & C

Is there a certain piece of equipment in your office that you rely on heavily? What if your computer or some other vital electronic device failed instantly and completely? Do you have a backup in place? If not, have you identified suppliers and vendors that could readily repair or replace the vital parts or equipment? Could you be back up to speed within a day…within an hour? As you are planning each step in your event, ask yourself, "What happens if...?" and then think about all the ways it could go wrong, not just related to technology: electricity failures, missing technicians, inclement weather, forgotten door prizes, or anything else that might turn the event into a disappointment. These things do not need to ruin all your hard work; Remember, the details count. What seems like a tiny issue can be very costly if not clarified, up front if you don't take every preemptive opportunity.

Apologize & Empathize

When things go wrong during your meeting, it's important to remember to remain kind to the people you are working with, whether that be a fellow staff member, supplier, planner, or facility. The party at fault should be willing to take full responsibility for the offense without sharing the blame with anyone else, and without presenting mitigating circumstances. Admitting that you were wrong or a mistake happened emphatically, unreservedly, and immediately can help lower escalated tempers. It's always wise to give conflicting parties space, which should allow enough time for both parties to consider all their options, and to assess their feelings.

It's important to realize the impact that any crisis, including technology, at your program or office can have on your organization. At the end of the day, contingency plans can be daunting to create; however, it is necessary to ensure a successful event. Take the time to plan now, so if the need arises, you are best prepared to face the challenges at hand as a true professional.

1980-2012 - A 30+ Year Timeline of Meetings Technology Innovation

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Technology changes in the past three decades have been astonishing for both the meetings industry and for society in general. To see how far we have come, I felt it would be helpful to put together this chronological list of significant technology milestones with societal technology events in **"black"** and meetings industry innovations in **"red."** This list is far from comprehensive. Send me your major meetings technology milestones to include!

1980
Worldwide, the number of computers in use is 1 million.

Conferon develops a system of wireless headsets and beepers for meetings that is designed to improve on-site communication. This is before the widespread use of portable radios.

Several registration companies (Galaxy Information Services, CompuSystems, and Registration Control Systems) offer basic computerized badge production and lead retrieval (via embossed plastic "credit" cards) to the trade show industry. Before these cards, exhibitors wrote down attendees' badge numbers, which the registration company later matched to the contact information.

Galaxy provides the first computerized on-site registration. Using 12 registration stations transmitting over one 1,200-baud modem, this innovation eliminated the need for an on-site mainframe computer.
Ray Shaw of Intermedia in Brisbane Australia imported U.S. computer components to build a CP/M computer. He wrote "Camputer" which lead to Version 1 of EVENTS which eventually became Amlink. A 400-person conference was run on Events V1 during the year. The original program was a flat database, produced nametags, rooming lists, reports and confirmation letters. It took about a week to set up the software for each conference.

1981
Commodore VIC-20 hits the market — the first color computer for less than US$300 — and sells more than 1 million units. The monitor was a TV set, the storage was a cassette tape, and the "killer apps" were video games.

IBM releases the first personal computer.

MeetingPro, the first database software for the meeting industry, is released for continuing medical education events, enabling personalized confirmation letters, big-print name badges, accurate attendance lists, and basic market tracking. This product was later renamed as PeopleWare.

1982
Compression Labs begins selling US$250,000 video conference systems with US$1,000 per hour line charges.

1983
Eric Orkin launches Delphi Management Systems, the first comprehensive meetings and group sales, marketing, and catering software for the hospitality industry. It became Newmarket Software in 1985.
Events V2 (which eventually became Amlink) was rewritten in PL1. This reduced the customization time to less than a day per event. This was run on a 24-user MP/M computer which connected to a Compugraphic typesetter to produce abstract books, conference publications etc.

1984
Apple releases the Macintosh Computer, the first widely produced computer with a mouse and a graphical user interface.

Galaxy ran 120 tradeshow registration workstations from a single microcomputer built by Digital Systems Corporation.

Events V3 (which eventually became Amlink) was demonstrated a Technicongress in Paris. This was the first meeting planning software suite seen in Europe.

1985
Microsoft releases Windows 1.0 in is initially sold for $100.

1980-2012 - A 30+ Year Timeline of Meetings Technology Innovation cont.

CD-ROMs is released with the ability to store 270,000 papers of text on a single disk.

The first Internet domain name symbolics.com is registered by Symbolics, a Massachusetts computer company on March 15, 1985

Phoenix Solutions releases MeetingTrak 1.0, another very early meeting planning relational database product.

The first badge making software, PCNametag, is introduced at MeetingWorld in New York. Using a dot-matrix printer, it could produce 120 badges per hour. Attendees lined up three deep to see the product.

1986
The first IBM PC virus in the wild was a boot sector virus call Brain.

The first commercial mailing list program called LISTSERV is developed by Eric Thomas.
Compaq introduced the first 386-based PC compatible computer.

MeetingMatrix, the first room diagramming software created and released by E.J. Siwek.
Meeting Industry Microcomputer Users Group is formed by Judith Mathews. For several years, MIMUG met before the annual meeting of Meeting Professionals International (MPI). The tabletop software displays were among the first technology education for the meeting industry.

1987
The first association focusing on meeting technology is formed. The association, its name lost to history, lasted about two weeks before being co-opted by MPI to become the Computer Special Interest Group.
PowerPoint 1 (originally called Presenter) is released. It provided only black-and-white images, had only one transition, and ran only on Macs.

1988
IBM and Sears joint “videotext” venture starts operation under the PRODIGY name.

1D barcodes emerge as the first generation of paper-

1980-2012 - A 30+ Year Timeline of Meetings Technology Innovation cont.

based automated lead systems for tradeshows. Sixteen hotel chains contribute $100,000 each to fund a startup company, The Hotel Industry Switch Co., to electronically link the global distribution system companies, such as Sabre, with hotels' computerized reservation systems. THISCO eventually became Pegasus, and now processes more than 300 million transactions per month.

1989

From 1987 to 1989, the global number of fax machines more than doubles to 2.5 million units.

The number of computers in use worldwide reaches 100 million units.

The Internet bulletin-board system Quantum Computer Services acquires a new name, America Online (AOL). From 1989 to 1998, AOL grew from 100,000 members to more than 14 million members.

PCNametag and LasersEdge develop software for laser-printer badges.

McNametag, one of the few meeting-industry software programs ever written for the Macintosh computer, is released.

1990

Tim Berners-Lee invents the World Wide Web.

1991

Computer companies introduce notebook computers with advertisements showing happy users with their "freedom machines" by pool sides.

PlanSoft begins development of Ajenis, the first attempt to standardize meeting specification communications between meeting planners and hoteliers. The software eventually rolls out in 1995 but is not widely adopted, in part because of rising competition with early web-based tools.

School Home Office Products Association is the first group to use smart cards (plastic cards with integrated computer chips) for lead retrieval at its trade show.

1993

At the start of 1993, the web had a total of 130 sites.

America Online and Delphi started to connect their proprietary email systems to the Internet, beginning the large scale adoption of internet email as a global standard.

Apple computer introduced the first PDA (personal digital assistant) called the Newton.

MPINet, the first online discussion group for meeting professionals, is created as a forum on CompuServe. The formation committee of 16 people met in December 1993, and the service went online the following month. It grew to more than 2,600 members before closing in 1997 losing ground to web-based forums.

1994

Laurence Canter sent the first spam e-mail — "Green Card Lottery 1994 May be the Last One!! Sign up now!!" — creating a huge uproar in the internet community. As a result, Canter lost his job, and his Internet service provider cancelled his subscription.

To keep track of Web sites of interest to them, two Stanford students created "Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web" which soon was renamed Yahoo!.

The first software product to track meeting spend and sourcing is introduced by McGettigan Partners (now Maritz). This evolved into Core Discovery, originally provided only to McGettigan clients. In 1998, the company released an upgraded version with a web interface to the general public under the name Real-Planner. In 1999, this became a separate company, StarCite, with a package of Web-based sourcing, attendee management and spend-tracking solutions.

Registration Control Systems and Galaxy provide magnetic stripe cards for trade show lead retrieval.

1995

The number of U.S. homes with one or more personal computers increased by 16% in 1995 to about 38 million households, up from 33 million in 1994 and 25 million in 1993.

1980-2012 - A 30+ Year Timeline of Meetings Technology Innovation cont.

Conferon creates a separate entity, PlanSoft (later known as Mpoint), the first comprehensive searchable meeting facilities online database and RFP (request for proposal) engine. This was a unique consortium of a privately held company (PlanSoft), two associations (MPI and the American Society of Association Executives), and three hotel companies (Marriott, Sheraton, and Hyatt). Plansoft.com came online in 1997.

Reed's InterMedia trade show is the first to use two-dimensional barcode paper-based lead badges, allowing exhibitors to extract full contact information directly from a badge.

Holiday Inn opened the first hotel Web site with online purchasing of sleeping rooms.

The first online meeting-registration tools emerge — all hand-coded by programmers.

Lee Travel took over Internet World Tradeshows to managing housing. They provided the first housing web site in 1996 to track room blocks and real time housing inventory. From Lee Travel grew b-there.com in 1998, one of the major pioneering attendee management, housing and meetings consolidation products. Their product was originally called ERS – Event Reservation System and was one of the first template-driven housing and registration products. B-there was later purchased by StarCite.

Microsoft NetMeeting, a web collaboration tool, is released with Windows95, allowing people to use their computer to "meet" and work together from remote locations. It was soon joined by WebEx (1996), PlaceWare (1996), and others to provide audio, slides, screen-sharing and file-sharing collaboration capabilities.

1996

The San Francisco Miyako Hotel (now the San Francisco Radisson) provided the first online request for proposal, built by Cardinal Communications.

Passkey, one of the first online housing companies, is founded by hotelier Bob Motley and Brian Layton. The first Passkey-enabled single property meeting was for the New Orleans Sheraton Hotel for 900 people in 1998.

Cardinal Communications creates the Meeting Industry Mall, the first Web-based interactive meeting industry portal. From this grew the MIMlist, the first listserv for meeting professionals.

1996-1997

Most of the major hotel corporations and meeting industry associations developed web sites.

The first template-based meeting registration tool is released by RegWeb by Cardinal Communications. This allowed planners to set up semi-customized registration pages without a web designer. This is the precursor to the thousands of meeting industry application service providers to follow.

1998

Google opens workspace in a Menlo Park California garage in September and is recognized as one of the "Top 100 Websites" by PC Magazine in December 1998.

ExpoCardWeb started allowing exhibitors to access leads via a web-based tool.

AllMeetings.com provides a free online meetings cost-analysis tool.

Lee Travel provided the first generation of an online integrated housing, registration, and air-booking product that incorporates zone fares.

In April 1998, the Open Source Summit event was held. This was a pivotal event significantly boosting the idea of free, publically developed (open-source) software. This has grown into a much lower price and faster software development model including the Linux and Android operating systems and hundreds of thousands of mobile applications.

1999

Several pundits predict total a computer system collapse because of the Y2K bug (the inability of older computers to distinguish between the year 1900 and the year 2000). Almost no problems are encountered

1980-2012 - A 30+ Year Timeline of Meetings Technology Innovation cont.

in the New Year, but fears lead to major system upgrades throughout the global corporate environment.

HotDatesHotRates.com became one of the first websites to offer "distressed inventory" — hotel meeting space and sleeping rooms — usually at short notice and at discounted rates.

September 1999 - seeUthere.com launched one of the event planning application service provider (ASP) products (renting web-based applications versus software installed directly onto a computer), with online credit card acceptance for registration fees. Evite.com at about the same time launched a consumer-oriented site, which was eventually purchased by Ticketmaster.

2000
Sixty percent of U.S. households own at least one computer.

The LoveBug worm/virus infects 2.5 million PCs and causes an estimated $8.7 billion in damage.

Application service providers (ASPs) explode onto the meeting planning scene, fueled by enthusiastic venture capitalist funding. Several of these companies do not last past the bust in 2001.

The first virtual trade show, ExpoExchange, is held.

SpotMe presented its mobile networking device in London, allowing attendees to see pictures and contact information of people standing within 30 feet (10 meters). Session information, audience polling, surveys, attendee lists and more were later added. This was the precursor of many mobile event apps seen today.

GetThere Direct Meetings provided the first online group space reservation tool. This is followed in 2003 by other group room block reservation tools such as Groople and Hotel Planner, primarily for small meetings.

APEX (Accepted Practice Exchange) initiative is started by the Convention Industry Council, the first voluntary standards initiative for the meetings industry.

2001
Apple released the iPod, which became the most popular MP3 player in history leading to a disruptive and sweeping change in the music industry.

Wikipedia, the largest and most popular general reference site on the web was launched in 2001. It now has more than 17 million articles written collaboratively by volunteers around the world.

Use of online meeting and collaboration tools such as WebEx and PlaceWare (now Windows LiveMeeting) spiked after September 11 terrorist attack in New York.

November 12th: seeUthere.com and TRX ResAssist offer the first online, real-time group air-booking products.

StarCite offers the first Web-based, two-way, real-time RFP tool for meeting space and rooms.

Growing numbers of attendees search online travel site such Expedia (launched in 1996), Travelocity (1996), Orbitz (2001), and others — to find low-cost hotel accommodations at events. Booking "outside the block" creates significant attrition problems for planners. In 2004, to combat the problem, Hilton launched its Group Reservations Identification Program, allowing planners to compare registration lists with hotel guest room reservations and thereby account for all attendees staying at the hotel.

2002
Hyatt rolled out E-mmediate Meetings, an online meeting-booking tool designed for small meetings. From this came E-mmediate Response, the first real-time, two-way connection between an RFP site (in this case StarCite) and a hotel sales system.

Web-based business meetings matchmaking programs are developed. The first was Columbia Resource Group's Rio product. Others to follow were IntroNetworks and ExpoExchange's Smart Event. Similar to the widely used social matchmaking programs, these programs assisted attendees to find people of like interests at meetings. These were the meeting industry precursors to Facebook and other social media sites.

Mobile web logs (MoBlogs) are first used in a meetings setting with technology companies leading the way.

1980-2012 - A 30+ Year Timeline of Meetings Technology Innovation cont.

2003
Intel incorporated Wi-Fi (wireless internet receiving capability) in their Centrino chip opening a floodgate of wireless internet adoption in the next few years.

Web services standards were developed making it much easier for different online programs to share data through APIs (Application Programming Interfaces). This allowed online databases and software to become much faster and easier to develop.

In May, the amount of SPAM e-mail exceeded the amount of legitimate e-mail for the first time.

A number of strategic meetings management programs (then known as meetings consolidation products) were developed and refined.

Intellibadge was the first to use RFID (radio frequency identification) to track attendee movements in the exhibit hall and meeting rooms for IEEE meetings.

Wi-Fi (wireless fidelity) wireless high speed internet access is deployed in more than 6,000 hotels,
The first product from APEX (the online glossary - http://glossary.conventionindustry.org/) was delivered. Many more products (voluntary standards) were later released including meeting history standards, site profile, requests for proposals, housing/registration, and green meetings.

2004
Google indexed more than 8 billion pages on the web.

Facebook (limited to Harvard students only) started this year.

The number of online bookings for Hilton Hotel exceeded those of their call centers for the first time.

Two of the major meetings technology vendors, PlanSoft and SeeUThere, merge to form OnVantage

2005
YouTube, the first video sharing site came online in 2005 and has grown to one of the most popular sites on the web. YouTube used more bandwidth in 2010 than the entire internet did in 2000.

The two oldest meeting planning software firms (Peopleware and Amlink) merge under the Amlink name.

2006
Twitter, the micro blogging site opened with 140 characters maximum per message.

iTunes downloaded its billionth file in May of 2006.

Web 2.0 technology (later to be called social media) started to be used by the meetings industry including blogs, video blogs, and wikis (interactive web sites).

The two largest meetings consolidation technology vendors, OnVantage (a merger of PlanSoft and SeeUThere) and StarCite (a merger of StarCite, b-There and RegWeb) merge.

Mobile phone technology providers such as LogOn develop products for meetings including a variety tools such as product directories, networking functions, schedules, and audience voting via standard cell phones.

2007
Apple introduces the iPhone in June revolutionizing the mobile phone industry. More than 74 million iPhone were sold in the next 4.5 years.

Google releases GoogleDocs providing free web-based spreadsheets and word processing tools.

The South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference in Austin Texas became the tipping point in of popularity for Twitter increasing tweets from 20,000 to 60,000 per day (in 2011 this grew to 200 million tweets per day).

2008
Amlink merged with Certain Software in April 1, 2008.

Active Network acquired two major online registration companies: RegOnline and WindgateWeb.

1980-2012 - A 30+ Year Timeline of Meetings Technology Innovation cont.

Cvent launched the Cvent Supplier Network, the largest free marketplace that connects event planners with venues. More than $7 billion worth of group business flowed through the system in the next four years.

2009
Digital television became the broadcast standard in the U.S. and other parts of the world, opening the door to web-based TV services.

Seasite.com launched: the first web-based RFP tool designed for meeting professionals to source cruise meetings and events.

2010
Apple introduced the iPad, another revolution in portable "tablet" computing.

There are 4.7 billion mobile phone subscriptions (2 out of every 3 people on the planet). There are more people with mobile phones that have running water or toothbrushes.

Skype provided high-definition video conferencing. This gave planners the ability to stream good quality video signal for free at events.

Mobile apps specifically for events and tradeshows saw explosive growth with hundreds of new companies providing services emerging.

2011
Amazon releases the Kindle Fire tablet computer/ eReader in October and sells more the 25 million by the end of the year.

There are more than 600,000 iPhone/iPad apps and 400,000 Android apps.

More than 5.6 million iPhone apps are downloaded daily.

There are more than 800 million Facebook users (more than 1 in 10 on the planet).

Major revolution occurs in the Middle East kindled by mobile phones and social media.

1.2 billion mobile apps were downloaded over the Christmas 2011 holidays.

FutureWatch 2011 Survey and others indicate that more than 80% of meeting professionals use smartphones and other mobile devices in their jobs. Yet, relatively few planners (9%) have used mobile applications yet for their own meetings.

The first "virtual wine tasting" occurs at Event Camp Europe using Google Hangouts (a free multiple location video conference product). Attendees at the main location in London, and pods of attendees in Poland and Sweden, were all provided wine. Using this free video conference too, attendee in all locations simultaneously heard/saw the description of the wine from the host, felt the wine glasses, saw the color and legs of the wine, smelled the bouquet and tasted it. All five senses were engaged.

Cvent received a $136 million investment, the largest round of funding in the history of the meetings and events technology industry.

2012
Active Network acquires StarCite. Previous merges of these two companies include some of the major pioneers of meetings technology: RegWeb, b-there, seeUthere, PlanSoft, OnVantage, RegOnline and WingateWeb — another step in the consolidation of major meetings technology companies.

Corbin Ball, CMP, CSP is a professional speaker and consultant focusing on meetings technology. With 20 years of experience running international citywide technology meetings, he now helps clients worldwide use technology to save time and improve productivity He can be contacted at his extensive web site:www.corbinball.com and followed on Twitter: www.twitter.com/corbinball

Stretch Your Imagination (and your screens)

By Bill Biegler

Today's video playback and projection technology is opening a new world of exciting possibilities for corporate events and meetings. No longer do video productions or presentation graphics have to fit in the traditional 4:3 or 16:9 aspect ratio screens. Now, that exciting opening video for your event can stretch across an extreme wide screen or even wrap around the room on multiple screens for maximum visual impact and audience engagement.

Current generation High Definition video projectors and switchers provide the technical tools to display video and graphics in stunning new ways. Video content and graphics can be designed and created to fill an extremely wide projection surface with aspect ratios of 3:1, 4:1, even 5:1. For comparison, HD television has an aspect ratio of under 2:1. Projectors and switchers are used to blend and shape this pre-produced content into a seamless High Definition display. The result is stunning video and graphic images that immerse the audience in the message and the experience.

Stage sets come to life.

This same projection technology can be used to create and project "virtual" set pieces and backdrops for presentations. Specialized software can "map" full motion video or still images to precisely fill the shape of set pieces or surfaces within the stage set. Backdrops come to life without hours of custom carpentry and painting.

Planning for impact

Maximizing the effectiveness of wide-screen and/or multiple screen projection requires careful planning and coordination of creative production and on-site display technology. Both video and presentation graphics must be produced in the proper aspect ratio. Wide-screen and multiple-screen video needs to be produced using multiple sources in frame-accurate synchronization to maintain true High Definition quality. This creative and pre-production effort must be designed to work with the on-site projection and playback technology. The extra effort, planning, and creative design pays off with stunning visual impact.

Use Event Production Services to create and execute content.

A full service event production company with experience in wide-screen production and display is a valuable resource to help create, produce and display unique images for your organization's next event. A full-service company can coordinate creative production with the latest projection technology to maximize the impact of your message.

New Tactics to Better Understand the Consumer

By Alec Windle

In this economic landscape with growing consumer markets and new communication outlets that seem to gain ground exponentially, it is hard for many companies to keep up, let alone think ahead. In the not so distant past, consumers viewed just a handful of advertisement fueled communication mediums. Today the average customer seems to be bombarded with messages with every turn of their head, as technology has taken marketing and advertising to a whole new level. The companies that seem to thrive in today's business culture are those that take these new technological advancements in stride and use them to better understand consumer wants and needs. In my opinion the most important aspect of marketing is to be able to get inside of a customer's head, really wrap your product and brand around those needs. Taking advantage of the tools and data available allows companies to understand their consumer's wants and needs, making the relationship stronger for both the business and the customer.

The overall idea of data mining is the use of valuable point of sale data in conjunction with customer demographics, to better direct sales and marketing activities to the correct customer. This is becoming common practice throughout the web especially. Facebook is a great example of this in which the advertisements that you see are directly tied to an algorithm that takes into consideration the items you have stated in your profile as well as what you have posted on your status updates. Recently, I liked the Doberman Pincher page on my Facebook page because of the love of my own, and immediately I began receiving advertisement links to Doberman memorabilia for sale online.

One example of the power of data mining that was recently in the news happened to a large retailer. A father received coupons from the store for items that would be useful for a customer who is expecting a baby in his teenage daughters name over a period of time. He was enraged, and came into the local store to express his feelings to a manager, claiming the retailer was promoting pre-marital relations to his daughter. Upon the follow up from a higher level corporate representative, the gentleman informed the representative that there were things happening with his daughter that he was unaware of and he had recently found out she was pregnant. Examples like this bring a whole new mindset to how companies are looking at their point of sale and customer demographic data. Conveniences and personal consumer knowledge bring discussions of ethical and legal grounds. But, in many instances the government is unable to keep up with the ethical and legal judgments of new technology. The line between what is and what is not invasive to the consumer begins to gray, and is open to personal interpretation.

Where do you stand on this topic? Do you feel that this is an invasive use of materials, or are they just using what they already have? This makes you think, what will advertisements and marketing be like in twenty years? It is hard for many people to comprehend the technological advancements, let alone how many marketing professionals are using this technology to capitalize before the competition. Recently, a large baby product retailer was informed by their marketing team that they had noticed a drastic increase in baby name search words in a certain area of the country from data they purchased. The retailer used this information to stock the appropriate stores, in which they received a large increase in sales over that area. Although this was a gamble, using information that could be perceived in

New Tactics to Better Understand the Consumer continued

various ways to their advantage, which ultimately paid off. Examples such as this give you an idea of the power of data.

With technology growing exponentially, the world in many ways is changing just as fast. In order to succeed, people and companies must think further and further ahead to anticipate the future readers of a client, and capitalize on this. This is where Trend Spotting experts such as Faith Popcorn (www.faithpopcorn.com), who works with companies to anticipate the needs and lifestyle of people in the future, to get ahead of their competitors in terms of taking care of their clients changing needs. Better understanding of your customer allows you to evaluate the needs of that market, so your service can fulfill that need and collect a profit. Understanding the sociological perspective of your primary markets, allows you to get ahead of the pack by making strategic business decisions based off sociological trends of various markets of customers.

What happens when you make important business decisions without understanding the consumer first? There are many examples of this, but the one that sticks out in the hospitality industry is the Euro Disney project. Recounts of the project, discuss many things that Disney did not take into account and also took bad advice in the process. In many ways they felt cultural decisions that they hold to in the United States, would transcend in Europe, and this was not so. These mistakes compiled into Disney not maximizing their profits, and in many ways looked at the project as a mistake in which they quickly changed to form around the customer's needs. With the park built in France, the name "Euro Disney" was thought of as disrespectful, as they felt the name was infringing on the nations personal identity. The park did not serve wine, which many guests found to be absurd. They heard that guests would want to bring their pets, so they built kennels, not knowing they would want to bring the pets in the room with them. This goes to show that barging into a market without doing your homework even for the most successful companies, can be a drastic mistake.

Alec is the editor of Define and the Director of Sales & Marketing at Grand Oaks Event & Business Center in Grove City.

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MPIOH Chapter Luncheon Meeting
Cleveland, Ohio

May 8 - June 26
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Tuesday Nights - 6:00pm - 8:00pm
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