



## OHIO CHAPTER

define

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL OHIO CHAPTER



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## The Official Newsletter of MPI Ohio Chapter

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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.



# President's Column

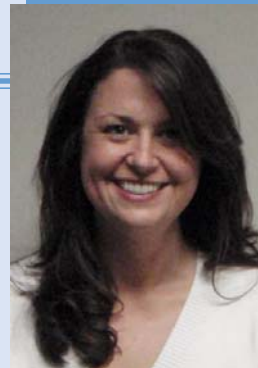
By Wendy Nicodemus, CMP

Looking over my past 16 years in the hospitality industry, I reflect on the people who have inspired me. I can remember a friend of mine introducing me to the industry and the first thing she said was; "You will either love this business, or hate it". Well, apparently I loved it. As professionals in this exciting industry, we have an opportunity to make an impact on the future. The way we did business 20 years ago compared to today varies, and offers so many opportunities for new growth. In my opinion, although the economic impact has created some hardships, it has brought us together. Our focus now is to look out for each other, invest in our careers and create a synergy between meeting planners and suppliers that has been there in the past, but may not have been as strong as it is today.

Based on my experience viewing the CMP study group and boot camp over the years, you see the planners and suppliers come together over the thirteen weeks. During the process there is a hesitation and fear of not knowing if you will pass, and you can see each study group create a bond by the time of the exam. Each participant lifts each others spirits, tests their knowledge and encourages each other along the way.

Many times, I have placed myself into situations where I may not be comfortable. I have learned a great deal by having the courage to try. With support and inspiration from fellow board members, friends and industry leaders, I have been able to overcome some of my fears of the unknown. I have never been one to like public speaking. However, within my positions, I have placed myself in front of a crowd. This is never a comfortable situation for me, but I have overcome my fear and it has opened many doors for me. I have also learned that I admire professional speakers, although, never want to be one.

Through many experiences within positions I have held, I have met many great people who taught me lessons that have impacted me on a professional and personal level. These individuals have inspired me to make a difference. I hope that each member of the Ohio Chapter of MPI feels the responsibility to share their knowledge and inspire someone on a personal or professional level.



## Welcome New MPIOH Members!

### November-December New Members

Tonia Bohnen  
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AIM, LLC

Kimberly Finch  
Customer Experience Coordinator  
The Lincoln Electric Company

Jeffrey Michael Smigelski CMP  
Account Executive  
CWT Meetings & Events

Liz Lonsbrough  
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Kettering Medical Center Foundation

Robert T. Ulas  
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Lake County Visitors Bureau

Lindsay Jo Fish  
Sales Manager  
Turfway Park LLC

# MPI Chapter Meeting Review

## Featuring: Dr. Todd Dewett

As a member of the Ohio Chapter of MPI, you have the opportunity to experience some incredibly insightful educational sessions that examine topics that are current and relevant to our working careers. October's chapter event, this was no exception as MPIOH welcomed Wright State University Management Professor, Dr. Todd Dewett, Ph.D., MBA. In the past, Dr. Dewett has worked for Fortune 500 companies across the country including positions with Ernst & Young and Anderson Consulting (Accenture). Dr. Dewett describes his expertise as "Understanding people in organizations and inspiring leaders to new levels of success". Dr. Dewett is one of those rare speakers that seem to grab the audience emotionally and really make a connection. His knowledge and unique problem solving abilities strongly relate to the events industry, igniting new theories on leadership that trigger positive company culture.

Dr. Dewett's presentation titled, "A Few Essential Leadership Truths" discusses leadership from a varied perspective than many in corporate America, which has been a catalyst to his success. He describes his self on his website as; "I'm loud, I look funny, and I know how to motivate". Dr. Dewett stated at the beginning of his presentation that his ultimate goal was to start a conversation within your company, to improve leadership and productivity. He argued that the hardest

thing is to keep the good talent and that the number one reason people leave their job is because of a bad boss. His point stressed the importance of a healthy company culture through effective leadership, stating that in order to be a great leader; you must improve yourself before improving others. He argued that "There is too much fake



positive culture, and not enough real positive culture."

Dr. Dewett discussed that many of his clients want a quick fix and think that he will have the one clue that will aid all of their troubles. He stated that leadership is not about one big thing; no one is born a leader. Leadership is a constant growth process, as management requires one to learn from their co-workers in order to succeed as a team. In the events industry, the team factor is imperative as event professionals must rely on the success of many, and yet seem completely cohesive. He discussed that many

times managers reach a particular level on the hierarchy, and they forget what it is like for the other two-thirds of the business. Dr. Dewett stressed that a successful manager is accepted by the team when they can relate to their co-workers first as people, then as employees.

Dr. Dewett's presentation really pressed for individuals to get a better grip on their personal and professional values. During a hysterical story involving an uncomfortable corporate situation, he pointed out that during your personal and professional lives you must make difficult decisions. When you find yourself in that gray area and you don't have your values down, you have a tendency to roll with decisions that you do not agree with. Dr. Dewett stressed that leadership is not about being popular, often times the unpopular decision is the correct one. A good leader is able to make decisions in tight spots, and having your values down gives you a head start.



# Social Media Update (new to Define!!)

Starting with the Dec/Jan issue of Define, we will provide the metrics of the major social media campaigns of the MPI Ohio Chapter. Our Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages are all up and making great strides... the MPI Ohio Chapter YouTube page will be coming soon. MPIOH recognizes the importance of Social Networking and is dedicated to growing each of these social media platforms as well as providing meaningful content to our followers, fans and friends over the ensuing months & years.



Recently, the Ohio Chapter of MPI began a Facebook fan page where users will be updated on chapter and industry news right on their home page news feed. In just over a month, the fan page has 53 connections. The MPI Ohio Chapter Facebook group has received the most feedback with 102 members currently.



Over the past few months, the Ohio Chapter of MPI has had great success in advancing the chapter's industry presence in the twitter community. Twitter is a great way to stay up to date on chapter events and especially industry news, where you will be forwarded to a variety of fantastic articles, blogs, videos and other great mediums. Recently, the chapter has been putting effort towards expanding their connections, or "followers" as they are termed on Twitter. Currently the chapter has 852 followers, more than doubling our presence in the past five months.



Linkedin is currently the most predominantly used social media medium in the professional market. This is also a great way to be kept up to date on information regarding the chapter, as news and articles are featured on the group page often. The next time you are on the site, be sure to check it out!



Be on the watch for a new MPI Ohio Chapter YouTube page! Coming Soon!

**Be sure to watch for this column/page in future issues of Define.**



# The 11th Annual MPI MidAmerica Education Conference

The 11th Annual MPI Mid-America Education Conference will be held in Louisville, KY. Join your colleagues and friends at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and the Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau from March 27-29, 2011. With a variety of excellent sessions planned, this year's event is bound to be one to remember!

The New MidAmerica Website is live!  
Check it out: [www.mpimidamericaconference.com](http://www.mpimidamericaconference.com)

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the website for the 11th Annual MPI MidAmerica Education Conference. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.mpimidamericaconference.com/>. The website has a blue header with the MPI logo and the title "11th Annual MPI MidAmerica Education Conference". Below the header is a navigation menu with links: Home, About, Sponsorship, Volunteer, Event Details, and Contact Us. The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a "Contact Info" section for Lauren Estness, the Conference Administrator, with her phone number (513) 554-3073 and an email link. Below this is a "Contact Us" form with fields for Name, Email, and Message, and a "Submit" button. Further down are sections for "MAKE A DONATION to the MAC conference silent auction" and "SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES for the MAC conference". The central section features the conference title, a description of the event, and a large blue button that says "REGISTER for the MAC Conference Today! CLICK HERE To Get Started!". To the right of this is a map of Ohio with the text "Navigate Your Trail to the MAC Conference". Below the map is the "LOCATION" section, which lists the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 830 Phillips Lane, Louisville, KY 40209, and the phone number (502) 367-2251. At the bottom of the main content area, there are three columns: "FEATURING PLATINUM KEYNOTE SPEAKERS" listing Richard Aaron, BizBash Media; "KEYNOTE SPEAKERS" listing Eric Rozenberg, C&P, CMAA, MPI International Chairman; and "CONFERENCE EMCEE" listing Jon Petz. The footer of the website includes a copyright notice "© 2010 MPI Ohio Chapter. All Rights Reserved." and a navigation menu with links: Home, About, Sponsorship, Volunteer Opportunities, Event Details, and Register Today. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows several open applications, including "marketing - Microsoft...", "2011 MAC Conferenc...", "Document1 - Microsof...", and "MPI Mid-America Web...". The system clock in the bottom right corner shows "6:00 PM".

# Stuff Happens - Anticipating & Adapting



By David Gabri  
President and CEO  
Associated Luxury Hotels  
International

I once heard the statement,  
“The key to success is how  
well you adapt to Plan B.”

While this can apply to life, it  
also is relevant to the  
meetings, incentives, and  
hospitality marketplaces. After

all, one of the greatest challenges many of us face is the need to be prepared for the unexpected, and to handle it with anticipated clarity. We're particularly aware of this these days with the highly publicized environmental, weather-related and natural disaster events, and of man-made threats and security issues.

So it seems evident that now – possibly more than ever – meeting planners, association executives, incentive specialists, and hoteliers need to be prepared with contingency plans. This certainly applies to “big” items (i.e. a change of venue if that is mandated), but also to smaller tasks on your checklist.

So where do you start? I suggest build your resources.

Partnering + Preparation = Success

In other words, work with your national sales organizations (NSO) and hotel contacts to provide a strong “three legged stool” base relationship structure, building valuable alliances and a support system for when “stuff” happens. Generate a fair contract development process, and vet issues to help build trust prior to your program, and identify contingency options on major issues should the need arise.

Topics to address include: options if changes to the logistics or timing of the program are needed; discussing medical emergency procedures, and identifying the closest medical facility; outlining weather-related contingency plans (be it a minor weather occurrence like rain or a more intrusive weather incident like a tornado or earthquake); learning evacuation options and procedures; and identifying sources for CPR and other first aid.

Developing a partnership and a plan with your national sales contacts and those at the property prior to arrival can later prove invaluable in maneuvering a challenging situation.

As you discuss the possible venues for your program with your NSO professional, keep in mind that the second or third option could be an alternative site should something major occur which would necessitate a change of venue. Your NSO professional also has your “specs” and can immediately provide open options that fit your needs to aid in the process even more.

In addition, require that your suppliers have contingency plans for products and services that they provide. This includes your speakers too.

## Effective Communication

Communication within a crisis is vital. Before the program begins, identify a centralized real-time mode of communication for relaying critical information, using available technology. This could include a Twitter link; individual cell and text access to your attendees, suppliers, venue contacts and/or executives; a special code access site on your own website; or otherwise, so participants can be reached before, on their way to, and during the program.

The hope, obviously, is that your program will proceed as you planned without any major issues, and that you will not need to go to Plan B. But the benefits of creating a contingency action plan, developing the “what ifs,” and establishing a reliable network of allies, will pay off when needed. Even if you don't ever utilize or implement any of these plans, your preparedness will showcase your management aptitude to senior leadership, and can serve as a very welcome reassurance for attendees as they prepare for your event.

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 distinctive portfolio of over 125 Four- and Five-Diamond hotels and resorts worldwide which specialize in meetings and conventions. Contact your nearest ALHI National Sales Office, call the “ALHI Group Desk” toll-free at 866-303-2544, or visit [www.alhi.com](http://www.alhi.com).



# Questions are the Answer: Gaining Buy-In



By Karen Hough

Meeting planners and professionals in the event industry are constantly working to gain buy-in: from the client contact, to the check-signer, to the attendees. Is

everyone happy with the theme, décor, activities? And in the meantime, how do we tactfully influence? Having all the stakeholders on the same page can mean the difference between Wow! and whoops...

Although we often want to tell people what we think, or what to do, asking questions is one of the most effective ways to influence and gain buy-in. There's a great story told by Dale Carnegie about being at a dinner party. He spent the entire night asking questions of a new acquaintance and listened to her talk about her own life. The next morning, the host called and said, "My guest couldn't stop going on about what an interesting person you are!" Carnegie had actually shared very little about himself, but his attention and focus on his dinner companion had made her feel *heard*. She felt relevant and understood, and that reflected back on him. By listening, he was also able to discern her priorities, and create a conversation that was meaningful to her. Carnegie shares an important secret: asking questions will always take you further than talking. Questions engage other people, and give us insight into them, into organizations, and often into ourselves.

I remember a meeting last year. I had been coached that my primary stakeholder, a C-level executive in a media conglomerate, would barely say 10 words to me for the 20 minutes we had allotted. I was told to present my material, and get out. Instead, I began asking him questions about the planned event – what would be the best outcome, in his opinion, for the attendees? If there was only one goal he could choose, what would it be? What was his best memory of a motivational event? 45



minutes later, he was still talking, and I had only asked 3-4 questions. What I gained was critical insight into how to make our partnership a success, and he felt confident that we understood his goals.

This technique is not easy for everyone, and we all need to practice how to be effective questioners. So how do we improve our ability to question?

- As elementary as it sounds, practice asking open-ended questions. They begin with phrases that invite people to share: "Tell me more about...." Or "I'd love to understand your process for..." or "Describe the best outcome..."

Conversely, closed-ended questions are the kind with which we are most familiar, and which yield very little information. "Do you like red?" Or "Should we hire a speaker?"

- Quiet your inner opinion. When we listen, we often immediately form a response and want to start talking again. Focus on the person, and only on them, rather than what you want to say.
- Spend an entire client meeting or family dinner asking questions. Listen with positive intention and – just this once – quell the desire to add your own piece.

And once you have all this information, you'll be able to connect with your clients and create amazing outcomes. Good luck, and have fun!

*Karen Hough, founder & CEO of ImprovEdge, [www.ImprovEdge.com](http://www.ImprovEdge.com) has been using improvisation as the catalyst for effective training and consulting for over 12 years. She is the author of "The Improvisation Edge: Secrets to Building Trust and Radical Collaboration at Work" to be published by Berrett-Koehler in 2011. She speaks nationally with humor on leadership, teamwork, diversity, and negotiation.*

# Time Is Precious - Maximize It!

By David Gabri  
President and CEO  
Associated Luxury Hotels International

If you are like many executives in our meetings profession, it seems you end each day wishing you had more hours to accomplish the many tasks at hand. It is not that you were unproductive during the day – far from that – or didn't maximize your day to the fullest; it is simply that the workload seems to be ever increasing.

There has been a renewed recognition of the value and benefits of conducting face-to-face meetings and programs — but there has been little change in the workforce of companies and associations. While business activities (including meetings) are up significantly from last year, businesses have not rehired or expanded, putting added pressure on their staffs to increase productivity while maintaining the work quality.

The current business environment has put a larger burden on many planners, compounded by the factor that the pendulum from the current "buyer's market" is certainly starting to shift. With the forecasted reduced availability at hotels and resorts in 2011, and especially in 2012 and beyond, planners are facing a more complicated market with renewed challenges in balancing organizational expectations and venue opportunities, and terms and conditions.

## Not Alone – Grab A Snorkle

Over 80% of planners surveyed indicated they have more pop-up meetings in 2010, which were simply added to their responsibilities. Remarkably, more than 47% of these meetings are being planned within 60 days. This is a significant heavier work load for many meeting professionals – making it commonplace to work even more hours, and sometimes be under water.

Add in the need for

time with family and friends, and for physical and spiritual pursuits, and there just doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day.

So what is a planner to do?

## Step By Step

First – **Exercise your network resources.** Identify and rely on trusted business associates and your "pivotal contacts," who are those who can accelerate your ability to get things done and "assist" you. Yes, this includes knowledgeable professionals with your reliable National Sales Organizations (NSO's), like ALHI, who will work as an advocate for YOUR needs, and will make it easier and more time-efficient to coordinate programs. Put them to work for you.

Second – **Consider two-for-one.** Since it is still a "buyer's market," with every indication that it is shifting, why not capitalize on the investment of your time and resources by utilizing multiple site visits to pick the destinations and venues for the next two or three programs? Then decide which year or period is the best order. Think of the time saved here.

Third – **Maximize trade show and event times.** Strategically participate to save time, which includes utilizing trade shows and NSO events in your city/region. Go with a plan of which four or eight people or venues you will seek out, with introductions requested by your NSO. In addition to providing a time-efficient means for identifying options that could work for you, trade shows and events can also be beneficial by eliminating options that simply won't work for you, saving you a costly and time-consuming site visit.

So take a step back to see if you are utilizing all of the available pivotal contacts, trusted business associates, and resources that can maximize your efficiency and reduce your workload. This could be the key to protecting your organization's interests for 2011 and beyond.





# MPIOH Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar to attend the upcoming MPIOH events. Watch your email for event invitations and to register online.  
Or visit the website at [www.mpioh.org](http://www.mpioh.org).



DECEMBER	Program Type	Time	Program Description	Speaker(s)	Location
12/11/2010	CMP	9-2:00pm	Midwest CMP Boot Camp 8:30am to 2:00pm	Angie Gasaway	Quest Conference Center Columbus
12/15/2010	Chapter Meeting	10:30-2pm	Crisis Management: A panel discussion with industry professionals	Panel Discussion	Embassy Suites Dublin, Ohio

JANUARY	Program Type	Time	Program Description	Speaker(s)	Location
1/19/2011	Chapter Meeting	10:30-2pm	Joint Meeting Budget, Economics, & Strategic Planning topic	TBD	Cleveland Airport Sheraton Cleveland/Akron

FEBRUARY	Program Type	Time	Program Description	Speaker(s)	Location
2/16/2011	Chapter Meeting	10:30-2pm	F&B topic with local Chefs, Latest Trends/Decor	Panel discussion	Cincinnati/Dayton
2/23/2011	Reach	7:30-9am	TBD	TBD	Columbus

MARCH	Program Type	Time	Program Description	Speaker(s)	Location
3/2/2011	Reach	7:30-9am	TBD	TBD	Toledo/Sandusky
3/9/2011	Reach	7:30-9am	TBD	TBD	Cleveland
3/16/2011	Reach	7:30-9am	TBD	TBD	Cincinnati/Dayton
3/27-29/2011	Special Event	All Day	11 <sup>th</sup> Annual MPI MidAmerica Education Conference	Platinum Keynote Speaker: Richard Aaron, BizBash Media Keynote Speaker: Eric Rozenberg, CMP, CMM, MPI Chairman Conference Emcee: Jon Petz, Bore No More!	Crowne Plaza Louisville

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