Eight years ago, I was told to find an association and get involved to help broaden my knowledge base, customer base and brand reach. I went to an MPI meeting and listened to a woman speak who inspired me that day and inspires me still, Michelle Johnson. She was a chapter leader and I thought to myself, fast forward 5 years and I want to lead like her.

After that meeting she approached me, I let her know I was a new member and asked what I could do to make the most of the experience. And she said one word – volunteer. I’ve spent the last 8 years volunteering with MPI New England and I can honestly say that I have come out for the better in so many more ways than one.

I’ve grown my career with the help of doing work for the chapter that I hadn’t yet done in my real job. I’ve worked with some amazing partners in the chapter who have elevated my meetings and events in the eyes of our clients. I’ve hosted meetings for planner colleagues who heard about our facility via my involvement with MPI and trusted me to execute their vision. And I’ve expanded my skill set through certifications and opportunities that have arisen out of the organization.

And most importantly I have been able to watch and learn from leaders like Michelle Johnson, Mark Bice, Susie Prue and Richard Carroll; and instead of being a leader just like Michelle; I’ve taken the invaluable lessons learned from each of these incredible people worked on being a leader like ME! This has positively impacted my team at work, my clients and business partners and hopefully this chapter when all is said and done.

A few years ago we considered doing away with the word volunteer because the word carries a time consuming, scary connotation. I will not lie, being a volunteer, depending on your role can be time consuming but it should never be scary if the board is doing their job to set you up for success, and the benefits you will reap by being involved, being seen, giving back to the community to which we all choose to belong will, overtime, pay back in dividends and it starts very small by sharing a few hours of your time a month doing calls/emails to the membership; a day of your time working a registration or being a new member ambassador; a few days/weeks of your time co-chairing an education or special event program. There are opportunities to suit every interest, schedule and skill set.

Being a member of MPI is great, being an engaged member is the way to build business relationships and forge career paths for yourself and it does take a small effort on your part (or a bigger effort on your part if you are interested in a board position) but don’t let the word volunteer scare you!

Join us on March 21st at City Winery for our only COMPLIMENTARY meeting of the year. Representatives from all committees will be on-site to share areas where they need help, give you first hand examples of how volunteering has benefitted them and to have fun with your friends and colleagues who may not be members yet but would be interested in knowing more. It’s going to be a great night and a wonderful way to learn more before you commit to maximizing your membership.