

Volume 28, Number 3
May/June 2006

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The Answers to your Not-So-Secret Questions!

► **Tracy Norum, CMP**
*Premier Travel and Incentives
Oshkosh, WI*



Oh, how I wish I was in possession of that magical, mystical crystal ball to see with certainty what the future holds. Over the years I've made so many references to that crystal ball, my associates presented me with the closest thing they could find, a Magic 8-Ball. Many may recall that this is basically a solid black ball with a small transparent circle on the bottom. From the small peek hole you can view one of 20 short and concise answers to all the world's questions. If it could only be that easy!

We all know prediction is very difficult, especially if it is about the future. There are countless number of articles, surveys, and studies that apply varying methodology to the process of predicting the future. However, I will take my cue from the styling of my Magic 8-Ball and provide just a peek into the travel industry and the trends that are soon to become long-term directional changes for the industry.

Is this the correct tactic? The response from my Magic 8-Ball is "It is decidedly so."

1. Good news – Travel is on the rise.

"Outlook Good."

Americans are in the air and on the road in numbers not

seen since the beginning of the decade. According to the National Business Travel Association (NBTA), travel in general is back to 2000 levels with an increase in revenue in all sectors with the exception of US airlines.

2. Bon jour and bon voyage – We are heading back to Europe.

"Without a doubt."

Americans are beginning to go back to Europe for travel. But with the weak American dollar, they are opting more often for Mediterranean cruises because the prices are fixed with most pricing components quoted in USD.

3. History 101 - Shorter trips with a higher purpose.

"You may rely on it."

Cruises aside, a recent survey reports that travelers are taking shorter trips. Even with the popularity and sometimes "addiction" to our PDA's, Treo's, and Blackberry's we are haunted by the thought of our email inbox after a two-week trip. The idea of being out of commission for a long weekend is much more bearable.

The shorter trips are planned with a purpose in mind. Americans are going to places where they can also learn something – whether about history or fine cuisine.

4. Not so good news - The cost of travel is certain to rise.

"Outlook not so good."

A 12% increase in travel costs is predicted for 2006 by Runzheimer International, a Wisconsin based consulting firm specializing in travel management. Fuel costs have already increased by almost 20 percent, causing the major carriers to raise fares by \$10-\$30. The closing of refineries due to hurricanes Katrina and Rita compound the situation. Taxes added to the base airfare are increasing with no end in sight. Some airline ticket total prices include as much as 40% in taxes as a result of additional costs for improved security measures. Rental car pricing will follow suit as fleet costs and fuel prices continue to increase.

5. Coffee, tea, or ... a guaranteed seat assignment - the à la carte flight menu is expanding.

"Signs point to yes."

Travel Industry experts were on target when they first predicted



"Oh the Weather Outside Was Frightful!"



► **Jeri Lyn Kirchner**
Tundra Lodge Resort
Green Bay, WI

"...but the fire was so delightful!" This was truly the setting for the MPI WI Chapter meeting at the Tundra Lodge Resort & Waterpark. A record-breaking blizzard, resulting in some 13 inches of snow, wreaked havoc with the events of the day, but attendees (those who got there!) maintained their sense of humor and enjoyed a cozy day and night at the Tundra.

While 110 were registered to attend the event, it was still successful with 36 in attendance. Lunch was served in the cozy Caribou restaurant ... starting with a smooth and creamy crab bisque that warmed our insides and finishing off with a scrumptious pear dessert.

The afternoon featured the insightful Tyra W. Hilliard, Assistant Professor with the University of Nevada – Las Vegas, Department of Tourism and Conventions. Ms. Hilliard's session, titled "Walk the Walk: Ethical Issues for Meeting Professionals" explored the:

- Interrelationship between ethics, law and culture
- Application of ethical principles to real and hypothetical ethical scenarios, including some interesting role playing
- Comparison of the use of various ethical tools and instrumentalities in managing ethical risk, and
- Determination of a course of action for times when personal and professional ethics conflict.

According to Naomi Tucker, CMP, Humana, Inc., "Tyra Hilliard was very effective in communicating the interrelationship between ethics, law and culture and how this relates to the meeting professional." The other attendees would be sure to agree!

The blizzard resulted in the legendary Lambeau Field reception being cancelled, but that didn't stop this hardy group! They networked and relaxed the Tundra's Yukon Jax, which featured our favorite libations and a great pizza & pasta buffet for dinner around the cozy fireplace and leather sofas.

The Tundra Lodge and its staff were pleased to provide a safe respite from the storm for this great event and looks forward to hosting MPI WI again soon when we can showcase legendary Lambeau Field. ♦

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From the Editor's Desk

SEIZE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES!

► **Tami Gilbertson, CMP**
WPS Health Insurance
Madison, WI



Perhaps the most wonderful thing about the MPI Wisconsin Chapter (other than the super-great people that you get to meet, network, and volunteer with!) is the wide array of opportunities that are offered to each member. From Member Solutions to our revamped new web site (kudos to the Web Team!) to volunteer opportunities on every team and for every skill level ... there are just truly opportunities to grow and learn professionally and personally at every corner!

Sometimes, you just have to go for it! If that's getting up out of your chair at a meeting to mingle and introduce yourself or volunteering on a team that will help you explore a new skill set, then just make it happen. You need to take a chance and open yourself up to new challenges and new ideas.

It reminds me of something that I recently did...that although, I wouldn't call it outside of my comfort zone but it was definitely outside of what I "normally" do. I was in the Starbucks drive-through, with those not-quite-awake-cobwebs due to lack of

caffeine. And, I as I drove through, I noticed something familiar caught on a winter-dead shrub...was that a dollar bill? I did the old double-take – like I said, no caffeine yet. There was literally money on the tree and it was all mine for the taking!

Most days, I would have driven right by – and some days, I wouldn't have even noticed it. But, this day, I pulled the car over – ignoring those watching me from the drive-through window – and I grabbed the buck! Something as simple as that made me feel like a winner all day long! I seized the opportunity and made it my lucky day.

The next time you're on the web site or at a meeting or even reading this newsletter, step back and take a look around you – there are MPI opportunities that you are yours for the taking all around! Find something that will give value to you and that you can return value on. I promise you, your dollar on the tree is out there. If you utilize the resources that MPI offers, you just may find that it's your lucky day, too! ♦



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7 Tips

on Staying Healthy While Traveling

► **Lisa Lanting, CMP**
Preventive Cardiovascular
Nurses Association
Madison, WI



Do you have any quirky travel habits that keep you healthy?

A colleague of mine religiously wraps a plastic shower cap around the TV remote at hotels so she doesn't have to touch the buttons. Another swears by zinc lozenges, Emer'gen-C vitamin powder drinks, and hand sanitizer. Personally, I like to pack my own pillowcase and long sleeve shirt & pants for PJs so that my skin isn't irritated by the cleaning chemicals in the bedding.

Quirky or not, there are some things you can do to minimize the toll that traveling takes on your physical and mental health. I looked up various health department websites and found that they have a lot in common when it comes to advice on staying healthy while traveling – none of which are meant to replace the advice your doctor:

1. **Drink! ... water that is.**

In airplanes it is common for the humidity levels to drop below 25%. Frequent travelers are at risk for dehydration, especially at high altitudes, so be sure to drink plenty of water before and during your trip... and try to avoid alcohol and caffeinated beverages, which are diuretics.

2. **Wash your hands frequently with soap and hot water.**

According to the Centers for Disease Control, this is the most effective way to avoid contracting and passing colds and diseases

while traveling. If soap and water are not available, you can use an alcohol based hand sanitizer as a last resort.

3. Keep moving. I've seen some great hotel gyms, but what about the time spent en route? Many of us are forced to sit for long periods of time during travel, which not only can cause aches and pains, but more serious health problems as well. A great way to ward off aches and pains is to work those muscles! When searching online, I found several in-flight exercise programs designed just for this purpose, including foot flexing, knee lifts, neck & shoulder rolls, heel lifts, and ankle rotations – and some even come with a CD to guide you through it. During long flights, try to stand and walk around at least once per hour. This reduces your risk for blood clots forming in your legs, otherwise known as Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) which can be caused from sitting for long periods of time. Dehydration, family history, weight, and other factors can also increase your risk, so check with your doctor for more ways to prevent DVT.

4. Eat smart. This is a tough one when we are faced with hectic schedules, room service, and eating out. It's a challenge, but you'll feel better if you avoid highly processed foods and those high in saturated fat, sugar, sodium, and refined carbohydrates. To stay hydrated and keep your electrolytes in balance, try to

eat foods high in potassium such as unsalted nuts, spinach, broccoli, bananas, avocado, cantaloupe, bran products, granola, dried fruit, potatoes, and tomatoes. It is harder for your body to digest food while inactive so try to avoid large, heavy meals before traveling. A word about food poisoning: As a general rule, it is best to stay away from uncooked foods, street vendors, and any bottled water that is missing its protective seal. Also, in areas where the tap water is not considered safe to drink, you should also avoid ice, salad, and any fruit you cannot peel. Brushing your teeth with bottled water can be a pain, but your stomach will thank you later.

5. Prevent jet lag. When adjusting your biological clock to new hours of light and dark, I read that it typically takes about 1 day for every time zone crossed. Well, some of us can't wait that long! One way to get around this is to try adjusting your sleep schedule a few days before your trip to reduce the effects of the time change. Also, it can help to take a power walk and expose yourself to sunlight and fresh air at your destination to speed up the process. Most importantly, try to include "rest time" in your travel itinerary as jet lag can put a huge strain on your mind and body. Adjusting medication schedules between time zones can be tricky so check with your doctor before departing.

6. Protect your skin. Cities at high altitudes like Denver receive over 300 days of sunshine each year and there is 25% less protection from the sun's rays at this elevation. This puts you at higher risk for sun burn, skin cancer, and wrinkles! But no matter what the altitude or season, be sure to wear UVA & UVB protective sunscreen, sunglasses, and lip balm to protect your skin.

7. Prepare for the worst. If you travel internationally, check to make sure that your insurance covers you during travel - including medical evacuation. Pack all prescription medications in their original bottles and transport them in your carry-on luggage with a description of your condition in case of emergency. In your passport or badge holder keep a note card documenting the following: important insurance information, a list of prescriptions you take, any medical conditions you have, and the name and phone number of your emergency contact person.

We all have our own quirks and rituals when it comes to travel, but hopefully these tips have given you some ideas on how to make your globetrotting a little healthier and more enjoyable. Check with your doctor or visit <http://travel.state.gov> and www.CDC.gov for more information on staying safe and healthy during travel. ❖

President's Column

So long, farewell, Auf wiedersehn, good night

► **Kim Marie Ball, CMP**

2005-2006 MPI-WI President
Abbott
Abbott Park, IL



Greetings Brilliant Members of MPI-Wisconsin Chapter,

Allow me to thank you for your support to YOUR MPI-Wisconsin Chapter during my tenure as President. Remember when I said I "Ain't Too Proud To Beg"? Each and every time I asked for help, I received it. You enhanced my ability to lead the Wisconsin Chapter.

July 1, 2006 is just around the corner and I ask that you embrace and support Steve Lorenz, CMP as your new President with as much spirit and dedication you have provided me. Steve has an association management and hotel background and his leadership will truly benefit our chapter! Don't forget the new board! These individuals make an enormous volunteer commitment to lead MPI-Wisconsin Chapter and your continued support of the board is critical to the success of our chapter.

I am thrilled that I have found a profession that I'm passionate about and can share my enthusiasm daily! This has been a fabulous year of personal and professional growth for me. Thank you for embracing me during my employment transition and relocation. Much appreciation to my employers who have supported my MPI membership -- Abbott and Premier Meetings and Incentives, a division of Fox World Travel.

As you know, my family is my foundation. Thanks to Mom, Dad, Tracy, David, Alexis, Grace, Russ, Amy, and Elijah.

You know of one my favorite songs ... "Ain't Too Proud To Beg" by the Temptations and other favorites include the soundtrack of the Sound of Music – specifically,

***"SO LONG, FAREWELL,
AUF WIEDERSEHN, GOOD
NIGHT."*** ♦

MPI QUICK FACT:

Membership: MPI has grown from 159 members in 1972 to more than 19,000 members in 60 countries today. Seventy-one Fortune 100 companies are represented in the MPI membership. There are 66 chapters and clubs in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Japan. MPI is the only meetings industry association to maintain a 50/50 ratio between planner and suppliers.

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Supplier Profile: Rick Guerra

► Rick Guerra

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How long in the meetings industry?

I'm actually fairly new to the meetings industry. I've been with VISIT Milwaukee for just under a year and truly think I've found my niche. I came into this position with an extensive sales background starting my career in Real Estate, which I believe gave me a very solid base for my years in sales to come. As a native Milwaukeean, marketing and selling my hometown has come very easy to me. With my past experience interacting with and building relationships with clients, I think I'll have a very successful career in the meetings industry!

How long in MPI?

I am also a new member of MPI just recently joining in March. Although I am a 'new' member, I have participated and been involved in a few MPI events already!

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with:

One of the projects that I have worked on most recently is the 'Special Events Showcase' at the Midwest Airlines Center in downtown Milwaukee. I was on the planning committee on behalf of the sales team at VISIT Milwaukee. I do look forward to becoming more involved in the future and am more than willing to volunteer my time and ideas to MPI!

Family: I come from an absolutely incredible loving

and supportive family! I am the middle child and only boy of 3 children to my parents who have been married for 35 years. They are an inspiration and keep me motivated to be the best person I can be! My oldest sister is also active in many local Milwaukee organizations and works for another non-profit. She has also been very influential and supportive in helping to shape who I am and where I am going. For that I am forever grateful!

Where were you born?

I was actually born in McAllen, Texas, which is located in the Rio Grande Valley 7 miles from the boarder of Mexico. Unfortunately I was too young to ever remember living there but I still have family there and have been able to visit on many occasions.

Where do you currently live?

After living on Milwaukee's East Side and Downtown for the past five years, I've recently made the leap into home ownership and left the hustle and bustle of downtown living. I'm still in Milwaukee, but no longer within walking distance of my office and so many other places that were so conveniently located. I guess the sacrifice in driving time will pay off when I'm having a BBQ in my own yard!

Favorite Pastimes:

I have a very wide variety of things I like to do and am always interested in trying new activities. I prefer to stay active

and enjoy going to the gym, snowboarding, playing in any and all sports but most of all I enjoy being on my boat with friends during the summers. I really can't think of any other thing that I would want to do more than be out on the lake!

Favorite Musical Group:

Music has always been a major part of my life so picking one group would be impossible. My Father was and is still a professional musician who specialized his talents on percussion instruments. Luckily for me those genes were passed on and I too was taught how to play the piano, saxophone and most importantly the drums. I have a special love for Jazz, Afro-Cuban and Salsa music. I tend to listen to whatever feels right that day. Anything from Dave Matthews to Radiohead to Bob Marley and everything in between!

Dream Vacation:

As much as I would enjoy going off to a tropical island to lay in the sun doing absolutely nothing while drinking colorful drinks with umbrellas in them, I wouldn't consider that a dream vacation. Instead I would rather fly to France, Switzerland or even Blackcomb/Whistler British Columbia to go snowboarding in the mountains. I would want to stay in a chalet located right on the mountain and be able to walk outside, strap in and float my way down the mountain thru waist deep powder! To top it off I would want to hike into the backcountry to try and

explore new lines down. That's a dream vacation!

If I won the lottery I would:

Wow the possibilities! Most importantly I would make sure my parents were well taken care of. They've always provided me with more than I need so it would be their turn to get spoiled. Along with their new house, my Father would get a new Cadillac and my Mother would get back her red convertible sports car she gave up when she had children. As far as I go I would probably do what most people would do. I would get the new home, car and a few toys, but I think I also might open a restaurant or nightclub to give me something to keep my time occupied. Investing would be a must! Money goes fast and once I got it I would definitely want to keep it.

Words to live by:

"Don't be anybody's fool."

My Father

I must have heard this a million times growing up as I was leaving the house. It's a simple statement that can hold a lot of weight!

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you?

I'd like people to know that my phone is always on and I'd love to have the opportunity to talk to them. Whether they're planning a meeting or hosting an event somewhere, I really enjoy getting out and putting faces to names so give me a call and let me know when and where! ♦

agenda staff

Published bi-monthly by
Meeting Professionals
International –
Wisconsin Chapter

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Statements of fact and opinion within Agenda are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not imply an opinion of the officers or members of MPI or MPI-Wisconsin Chapter.

Publication Deadlines:

July/August 2006
Deadline: May 19, 2006

September/October 2006
Deadline: July 19, 2006

November/December 2006
Deadline: Sep. 19, 2006

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Were You One of the Lucky Ones?

► **Greg Leeper**
Hinton and Grusich
Chicago, IL



If you had the opportunity to attend the Spring Education Day and Special Event Showcase at the Midwest Airlines Center in March, then you know how fortunate you were to enjoy a great day of education and networking with 140 other meeting professionals. If you missed being there, then you missed some excellent speakers and a lot of fun!

Barb Taylor Carpender, CMM of Taylored Training conducted two great interactive sessions on “Surviving the New Economy: Life In The Trenches.” The discussion and group exercises promoted some lively discussions between planners and suppliers about expectations of each, and everyone left with a much better feeling about what each party wants and needs before, during, and after the negotiation process through the execution of the meeting. This session could have been extended by an hour easily as everyone thoroughly enjoyed it.

Marge Risinger, CMP, of Rosenberg & Risinger, Inc., offered some very helpful sessions entitled Planning Healthy Menus for Today’s Diets and Palates. We were reminded food choices have a

noticeable impact on a person’s state of mind, and it’s the responsibility of planners to make the right menu selections to insure attendees remain alert as well as being sensitive to some attendees’ special diets. It’s of utmost importance to

With Sharks – Uncommon Conflict Resolution with Tough Critters. He discussed the different types of conflict – substantive or personal. He also addressed when to use a rational approach and when to use the finesse approach.

Philip also introduced some great techniques for managing your fear of how to approach and diffuse conflict. He reminded us to remember that modifying human behavior is one of life’s most difficult challenges.

More than 100 exhibitors participated in the Showcase Marketplace including transportation

companies, photographers, caterers, event venues, convention and visitor bureaus, resorts, hotels, airlines, etc. – You name it and they were there. And a delicious variety of luncheon choices were offered throughout the Showcase Hall.

Simon T. Bailey, our keynote speaker, capped off the day with an inspiring message, Release Your Brilliance! Simon has spoken to MPI chapters across the country and his enthusiasm is contagious. Simon reviewed the importance of being read for the 30-second elevator ride. What would you



Kim Ball and Allie Gerschke Kinney promote the MPI - Wisconsin Chapter to an interested Showcase attendee.

know your group and their preferences. Make sure the food is pleasing to the eye and pay attention to color, texture, and shapes. Make sure it looks good on the plate. Take good care of the vegetarians with desirable options, as well as offering vegan selections. Keep the fat low to keep attendees from feeling sluggish and the protein high to sustain their energy level.

And for those of us who prefer to avoid conflict, Philip Chard from NEAS, Inc. enlightened us with many new approaches to deal with those tough people we come in contact with during his presentation, Swimming



Keynote session attendees complete an exercise to release their brilliance.

ask? Who would you ask it to? How would you give yourself the confidence to ask? Simon shared his own experience with meeting Michael Eisner at Walt Disney. We're all better prepared from Simon sharing his personal experience with us. Have you phoned the person next to you to see to check in if both of you are on track with the three goals you set on your action plan? If not, then do it soon! And, if you did, big kudos to you – "You're Brilliant!" From Simone's Rules of Engagement to his discussion on emotional commitment, he gave us practical tools that can help us all shine brilliantly!

Our new chapter web site was then unveiled and you're going to love the new look as well as how much easier it will be for you to navigate through the site. You can even pull up past issues of our newsletter. Check it out at www.mpiwi.org. The reception at the Hilton Milwaukee was most enjoyable as many lucky attendees left with prizes, gifts, and trips donated by numerous sponsors.

Needless to say, it was an enjoyable day, which I valued immensely. Hope you don't miss our Fall Education Day on November 9th at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison! ♦



Jenny DeBorja, Greg Leeper, and Lori Fuhrman are all smiles on the Showcase floor!

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Congratulations to **Adam Smith**, from the Racine Convention & Visitors Bureau, and his wife for their new addition. On February 26th they had a baby boy named Everett weighing 7.5 pounds with lots of red hair.

Our MPI Wisconsin Chapter Past President **Marge Anderson** has been nominated to serve a three-year term on the International Board of Directors. She has been a member since 1995 and we are honored to have her represent the MPI Wisconsin chapter.

Congratulations to **Alison Barta** who recently started as the Training Coordinator at Virchow, Krause & Company, LLP in Madison WI. Alison also received funds from the Maralyn Eisenstodt Scholarship to attend MPI's WEC in Dallas in July. Job well done!

Meredith Rockafellow recently joined the sales team at the Quality Inn & Suites. Meredith is a full time student at MATC in the meeting planner program and will be working part time at the Quality Inn & Suites.

Earning NICE awards at the NACE/ISES Chicago Excellence Event are: **Jamie Carlson**, House of Harley for "Best Social Event;" **Gloria Nelson**, CSEP, Gloria Nelson Event Design, LLC for "Best Nonprofit Event"; and **Mindy McPherson** and **Rick Madeja**, Karl's Event Rental, received top honors for "Best Festival." ♦

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Swing Back to Classic Elegance



MPI Awards Gala

► **Naomi W. Tucker, CMP**
Humana Inc.
Green Bay, WI



Swing Back to Classic Elegance at this year's 29th Annual MPI Awards Gala! This year's Awards Gala will be held at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake on Thursday, May 18th, 2006. Mark your calendars for this exciting event. This classic event will begin at 5:30 pm with cocktails and dinner at 6:30 pm.

Throughout the years, there have been classic acts that have demonstrated their commitments with class. This year we want to recognize the efforts of our members for their commitment to our industry and their professional contributions to the MPI WI-Chapter. What a great place to look back at our successes for this year than the historic Elkhart Lake and the Osthoff Resort! This is one of the most coveted events within our MPI-Wisconsin Chapter year, so you'll want to reserve your seat, or better yet, reserve a table, and bring your co-workers and clients.

The Osthoff Resort is nestled in a beautiful lake setting with panoramic views of the historic Elkhart Lake. Let this resort awaken your senses. From its delectable menu, lively entertainment, swinging after party, to the refreshing spa – you won't want to miss it!

Hotel accommodations are available at the Osthoff Resort on the evening of May 18th, 2006. Accommodations are \$79.00 for Woodland Rooms and \$89.00 for Lakeview Rooms. Please reserve your room by May 4th, 2006. Also, all MPI-Wisconsin Members attending the 29th Annual Awards Gala will receive 25% off resort spa services on May 18-19th, 2006! Put on your dancing shoes and let's swing into the new chapter year at MPI with a big bang as there are sure to be fond memories as we celebrate defining the power of meetings and those who make them happen. ♦



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Meeting Planners: Are You Prepared for the Impact of Sarbanes-Oxley on Your Business?

► **Patricia S. Eyres**
*Attorney at Law
Certified Speaking
Professional
Litigation Management &
Training Services, Inc.*



Corporate scandals have captured the attention of both the media and the Congress. To increase financial accountability and control, Congress enacted the Sarbanes-Oxley Corporate Responsibility Act (often called “SOX”). At first, SOX placed significant responsibilities on executives and auditors. In 2005, the law extended its reach to financial reporting that impacts the entire meetings industry. Conventions, travel and incentive awards and a host of other “meeting-related” activities fall squarely within the SOX compliance requirements.

Many meeting planners are still largely unaware of how the SOX requirements now directly impact your day-to-day work. Worse yet, those who are informed are uncertain about the extent to which you will need to implement new procedures, controls, and record-keeping. Still others are confused because of conflicting directives – both internal and external – on precisely what types of documentation you must maintain under SOX.

You need the tools to comply with the law and to interface seamlessly with executives who are accountable for certifying financial controls on meetings and travel. This article contains an overview of the requirements. Although you will need to comply with your organization’s specific documentation protocols, this article provides documentation guidelines.

What is SOX Section 404?

Section 404 requires each public company to include “internal control report” in its annual report. Companies must document financial reporting procedures in the annual report and have independent auditors sign off on it (this increases both cost controls and oversight of travel, meeting expenses, and incentive travel.)

SOX requires tighter controls on purchasing and procurement departments, including meeting space, hotel rooms, airline tickets, food, and beverage. Additionally, you should become well acquainted with your organization’s conflict of interest policies. Auditors and regulators will increasingly scrutinize supplier contracts to assure that the relationships are “arms length” business transactions. This is particularly vital in the context of complementary hotel and incentive travel.

Meeting planners need to focus on areas where there are risks of error, fraud or noncompliance with policies, and document the controls that are in place to mitigate those risks. This includes:

- Site-selection criteria
- RFP’s for vendors, including speakers and entertainment
- Planning and organization of activities at meetings
- Post-meeting activities and contractual agreements
- Travel and incentive programs

Meeting planners and suppliers within the industry must now have a specific process to memorialize and substantiate each expenditure for each meeting. Outside auditors will be scrutinizing the type of internal controls and procedures for verifying those controls.

The purpose of section 404 is to assure that corporations assess their internal controls for negotiating for products and services are consistent with business necessity and appropriate. The controls must be designed to identify areas of risk, including fraud, errors or inconsistencies in policies.

For SOX compliance, documentation and record-keeping are critical. The documentation of processes needs to be detailed but clear and easy to follow. Use process flow charts, outlines and lists to help with the organization. If you can’t easily explain it, or someone can’t pick up the documentation and understand it, you haven’t successfully completed the task. Also, auditors will be focusing on control lists. These should be tied in directly to the process flows.

Your organization’s current controls and documentation are a starting point for assessing whether your department must tighten existing procedures or implement new ones. Once you have thoroughly evaluated your existing procedures, you can make informed decisions about any new, revised or updated processes.

Keep in mind that whatever you develop, you must be able to follow completely. Section 404 doesn’t require that every single transaction be approved by senior management. Indeed, that would be unproductive and very difficult to implement uniformly. Under SOX, as with many corporate policies, the most fundamental factor is consistent application of your policies and procedures.

Much of the focus on SOX has been on the financial reporting documents. Many companies have specific protocols in effect and you should understand and follow them. But, planners must be mindful that business records that are classified “documentation” of your actions are much broader than the financial statements alone.

What is Documentation?

Documentation is a record of an event, discussion or observation by one or more individuals. Most organizations rely on documentation to record their activities and those of their employees. Any written information, whether formally or informally generated, can be considered a business record (read that: documentary evidence) if it is pertinent to a regulatory compliance requirement, such as SOX.

Written documents can include both hard copy and electronic records; even those that are never actually printed. Think about how often your negotiations and ongoing communications with suppliers, vendors, and colleagues takes place by e-mail. E-mail is often treated as “transitory correspondence” for record retention purposes, but it has the same force and effect as a formal contract or letter agreement signed with ink.

Why Is Documentation So Important?

Most compliance proceedings ultimately revolve around three simple questions about a business organization:

- What did the company know?
- When did it know?
- What did it do?

The same is true if you find yourself in an ordinary breach of contract dispute with a supplier or vendor. The negotiations between the parties that led to the final “agreement” are often the focus of any lawsuit, as the court will focus on whether the parties had a “meeting of the minds” on the essential terms of the agreement. A specific record of communications – including e-mail exchanges — is the best evidence of what actually occurred when the events at issue took place, such as when the contract was negotiated. Leaving this vital information to human memory is risky and often does not serve the company’s best interests. The author of the documentation may have retired or moved to another area. In the absence of a written record of the activities that took place, the company’s position may be significantly affected.

In the ordinary course of every meeting planner’s business it is essential to record and memorialize significant decisions and action items. It may be unproductive when documentation does not reflect the evolution of a business transaction or decision; particularly when events must later be reconstructed to assist the company and others in determining the true course of events.

Unambiguous, complete, accurate documentation can be invaluable when used in the context of regulatory or judicial proceedings. Complete records, used as an adjunct to accurate testimony, are frequently invaluable in enhancing the credibility of a witness.

Effective documentation has several elements. In particular, it should be easily understandable and readable by everyone in the organization. Consistency in documentation techniques

is vital. There is no single correct way to construct documentation or to memorialize your activities. It is important to develop procedures you and your department can enforce consistently. Much will depend on the type of activities you are documenting. Regulatory activities generally require more detailed compliance records, while others can meet their needs with simple files. The key is to use a system that works for you consistently, so you can reconstruct past events with ease and accuracy.

Consider the following five concrete principles of effective documentation. Using these techniques will help assure that your business records work for – not against your organization – in the courtroom or a SOX compliance audit.

1. Write with accuracy and precision.

Be factual with all business communications. If your documents can be taken out of context, or your records express opinions on the ultimate facts in dispute — without all the relevant facts — your position may be adversely affected in a lawsuit years after the business records were created. Avoid speculation, exaggeration, subjective or relative terms, which at best are ambiguous and at worse misconstrued. This is especially important when exchanging e-mail, as hasty replies often result in ambiguities.

Limit the use of relative terms, such as “frequent,” “excessive,” “better,” or “worse,” unless given in context. Think about your objective for the communication, and how you intend it to be read and acted upon. If someone reading the communication could ask “relative to what standard?” the writing is non-specific. Use objective facts and examples instead.

2. Avoid terminology that may be misleading to someone not familiar with the company or the industry.

Avoid slang or shortcuts in terminology. Minimize unnecessary technical jargon; by defining the meaning of the term in its technical context. Make sure that your communications are consistent with the intended recipient’s knowledge, so that you can defend against a claim that the recipient did not understand the content or requested action. Describe all actions and conclusions objectively, including the date, the decision or action reached, and any subsequent action to be taken or recommended. Don’t rely on second/third party information unless it is specified as such.

3. Stay within your personal knowledge and responsibilities.

When writing about activities or events, stay within your personal knowledge, expertise and responsibility. Don’t speculate or guess as to the meaning of any aspect of a business transaction with which you are not personally familiar.

Continued on Page 17

As Always, A Thank You to Our Partners



► **Paulette Heney**
United States
Bowling Congress
Greendale, WI

The finance committee met in February in Green Bay to work on the MPI Wisconsin Chapter Budget for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. We spent a day going through our income and expenses and working out all the kinks for the next year. The finance committee made a lot of progress in one day and we have since sent the budget to the entire board of directors for review.

The goal is to have the budget approved during the April board of directors meeting. We increased revenue streams to continue to build our funds over the next year.

As I look back on the first half of this fiscal year, we are doing extremely well. It felt like there were a few hiccups along the way, but we are looking like everything is on target to make budget this year.

As for the Strategic Alliance team, MPI Wisconsin continues to support the two partners we have for this year, OnVantage and Wyndham and we are very excited to have a new strategic alliance partner for 2006-2007. This new partner is Passkey, a housing software system company.

The fundraising team has been "kickin' some butt" this year. They have been

exceeding their raffle goals monthly and I am extremely proud of how hard the team has worked over the past year. We continue to rely on our partners to help make our chapter successful. Thank you for all you do for us.

Again, for all of you who generously contribute to MPI Wisconsin, **THANK YOU**, we couldn't move forward without you.

If you have any questions or comments or would like to assist us in hitting any one of our goals, please contact me at (414) 423-3332 or paulette.heney@bowl.com. ♦

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4. Close the loop on all significant issues raised in writing.

If information is requested of you, provide it promptly or notify the person of any foreseeable delays. If an action is requested in writing, and the resolution is not reflected in writing, the company runs the risk that its actions may later be mischaracterized.

5. Be consistent in your documentation techniques.

Inconsistency often reflects poorly in the courtroom, especially in the context of performance appraisals, when an employee claims that he or she was singled out for negative action. Consistent doesn't mean inflexible. Rather, it enhances the ability to defend against discrimination claims when the employer can demonstrate that the needs of the particular job consistently require adherence to concrete, well articulated performance expectations, and that all similarly situated employees are held to the same standards.

Record Retention is Critical Under SOX

Document Shredding. The term sends shivers down the spine of even the most scrupulous manager in today's legal environment. Why? Open any newspaper and you are likely to see a story about a high profile investigation, civil lawsuit, and even criminal proceeding against an entire organization and its leaders for alleged evidence destruction or tampering. Enron and Andersen are just two of the most recent organizations on the defensive.

Such prevalent news stories meetings professionals to ask, "What records must I retain?" and "How do I lawfully dispose of those records that are no longer needed in the ordinary course of business?" Make it your business to read and fully understand your organization's specific record retention policies for hard copy, electronic documents and e-mail.

Here are some additional general guidelines:

1. Follow Protocol

Planners should fully understand the company's records retention policies and should follow those policies consistently. Under SOX, your organization should make that violation of company policy may give rise to disciplinary action.

2. Communicate Promptly

Notify all appropriate company representatives of the obligation to identify documents and take reasonable steps to preserve potentially relevant documents when a proceeding begins or when the company has notice that the action is forthcoming.

3. Educate Your Staff

Make sure all employees understand the restrictions on disposing of hard copy documents (by shredding or other

means) and when they can hit the delete key for electronic records. In situations where a legal or regulatory proceeding has been filed or is anticipated, you must retain all relevant records beyond their disposal period. Realize that this also includes proceedings in which your organization may not be a party, but where your records may be relevant. Even if the documents should have been previously disposed of properly under your retention policies, if they still exist when the action is commenced or contemplated, you must preserve them for possible production. This is precisely the issue in many of the corporate fraud cases that led to the passage of SOX.

4. Implement Protocols Company Wide

Maintain consistent procedures for developing and recording relevant information. In areas where your organization's document retention policy does not apply, develop a records retention policy for your department that you can consistently enforce. Establish objective indicia for which documents to keep and which to destroy, but don't make the guidelines too cumbersome. The policy should be business related but still allow you to justify in later litigation why you did not retain a particular item. This limits the inference that you destroyed something not helpful to your position.

5. Maintain Integrity

Never backdate or fabricate a document once it is generated. If something needs clarification, create a new memorandum explaining the new information and the basis for it, and then date the new document with the current date. Remember that when you create or revise a document on a personal computer, the system records the date the document was last saved. If the date on the hard copy is different from that recorded, you could have some explaining to do if questioned about the veracity of documentation you created or had access to. Above all else, altering documents is both unethical and a prescription for disaster if you are ever asked under oath to explain the evolution of particular documentation. ❖

About the Author

Patricia S. Eyres, JD, CSP is an experienced attorney with over 18 years defending businesses in the courtroom. She calls herself a "recovering litigator." She is a full time professional speaker and author. Her most popular presentations are Leading Within Legal Limits™ and Is Your E-Mail a Legal Pain in the Net?™ She frequently speaks to meetings industry professionals can be reached at Patricia@PreventLitigation.com or at 1-800-LIT-MGMT

Planner Profile:

► **Lynn J. Schwandt, CMP**
*Senior Event Planner
 Thrivent Financial for Lutherans
 Appleton, WI*



How long in the meetings industry? 13 years

How long in MPI? I just became a member in January, 2006 (not too long)

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with:

I really haven't looked at what opportunities are out there yet, but do know that I would like to offer my services on some committee(s).

Family: I have a husband, Rick and two children (Steve, 18 and Alyssa, 16)

Where do you currently live? Still live in Appleton, WI. It's amazing to see how this city has changed over the years.

Favorite Musical Group: This is a tough question. I like all kinds of music. It's not a group, but I love listening to Josh Groban. Every time I hear his voice I get goose bumps!

Where were you born? Born and raised in Appleton, WI

Dream Vacation: I have done several programs on cruise ships, but I have yet to take a personal cruise. Send me on the SilverSea Cruise Line to the Mediterranean & I'll be happy!!!

If I won the lottery I would: Share with my family, put my son through medical school, donate to my favorite charities and then have fun with the rest of it. I suppose I should save some of it for retirement.

Favorite Pastimes: I love to watch my kids play in their sports (softball, baseball, and basketball.) I'm their number one fan!!! I also love to shop!!!

Special personal accomplishments: Getting my CMP. I put a lot of time and effort into preparing for this exam.

Person you admire most and why: In 2005, my dad experienced serious health issues and is still battling some of them. I've been amazed at his will to battle through these adversities while maintaining a positive attitude.

Words to live by: "If you love what you do, it won't feel like a job." I received this quote on a card as part of a turn down

service at a hotel. I spend quite a bit of time at work and I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now if I didn't love it.

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you? I am also a member of FICP—Financial and Insurance Conference Planners (formerly ICPA), an association of insurance and financial services conference planners. I was on the design team for their 2005 annual meeting which generated the highest attendance in its history. I'm excited to now be a part of MPI and will look for ways that I can get involved this organization. ♦

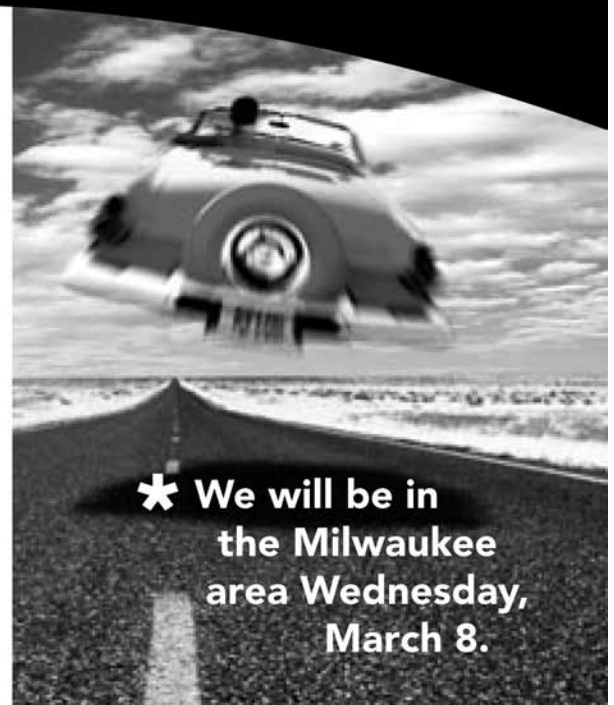
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Let's Talk Etiquette

► **Lori A. Fuhrmann**
Four Points Sheraton
Milwaukee Airport
Milwaukee, WI



When I was in high school my mother signed me up for modeling and the Seventeen Magazine Poise and Etiquette course that I went kicking and screaming to every Saturday morning for two years. I remember thinking that I would never use most of what I learned ... boy, was I wrong ... and after a few months, I really started to enjoy it and to this day just a few “ahem” years later, I still thank my mother for being so persistent. I have been a judge for the Miss Wisconsin Pageants and reflect back to my thought of “why do I have to get up so

early every Saturday morning and go to a 3 hour class. Why couldn't I have been a boy?” But now I see the need for this type of thing in so many young girls and women, even young men that I wish it were taught in schools.

Today, in the business world, I am really amazed at how many people, both men and women that really do have poor etiquette and manners.

Dining etiquette

Let's start with dining etiquette. How many times are you at a breakfast,

luncheon or dinner seminar sitting at a round of 8 or 10 and the banquet servers are placing your food in front of you. I cannot tell you how many times I see people start to eat before everyone has been served. Wrong! When everyone has been served, pick up your fork and proceed.

In the United States:

When you are done with your salad, dinner or whatever, the sign that the server can take away your plate is to put your fork face down, facing at 4 o'clock on your plate.

The fork is held in the right hand and is used for eating, except for us left handers. If I want to hit my mouth, I need to hold it in my left, but I do keep telling myself that left handers are always right.

To use the knife, the fork is switched to the left hand. To continue eating the fork is switched back to the right hand. Go ahead, practice. Foods or drinks can be refused without causing offense. Many foods are eaten by hand.

Now let's discuss cross cultural dining etiquette as many meeting planners and sales people travel outside of the U.S.

Things to think about first:

Seating: Is there a protocol as to who sits where? Should one wait to be seated? Is it acceptable for men/women to sit next to one another?

Eating: What utensils, if any, are used? Please don't give me chopsticks ... I always get hurt.

Body Language: How should one sit? Never rest elbows on the table in any culture. If sitting on the floor, what is the correct position?

Conversation: Is the meal the proper place to engage in conversation? Is discussing business appropriate??

The Food: What foods are common to eat? Is it good etiquette to compliment the cook and how? Does one finish everything on the plate? Is it polite to ask for more?

Restaurant: Who pays the bill?

Cell phone etiquette

And now, cell phone etiquette! I have well reached the point with cell phones where there are times that I feel the need to rip one out of someone's hands and lay down the law.

If you are a cell phone user, please use the appropriate etiquette and not subject defenseless others to the following:

Think about where you talk on the phone and other people cannot escape the pain of your conversation such as on a bus, train, plane, or anywhere else that the people around you are trapped and have no where to escape. Have mercy on us.

Restaurant

Here is a big one. Have enough manners to shut the phone

Continued on Page 31

Here are a few tips by Country:

Germany:

Try and cut food with the fork as it compliments the cook by showing it is tender. Do not begin eating until the host signals to do so. Indicate that you have finished by lying the fork and knife parallel across the right hand side of the plate. Fork in left hand, knife in right.

Japan:

An honored guest sits at the center of the table furthest from the door and begins eating first. (By the time I figured all of that out, the meal would be over.) Oh god, here come the chopsticks again.

Turkey:

Meals are a social affair. Conversations are animate and loud. (I think I must have a few Turkish friends.) If taken to a restaurant, the strictest rule is that who ever extended the invitation must pay. It is good etiquette to insist the most senior at the table is served first instead of you.

Middle East:

Eat with right hand only. Meat is torn by holding down the piece against the dish and ripping off a desired amount with forefinger and thumb pressed together. I say practice before you go. If you are finished, leave food on your plate otherwise it will be filled immediately.



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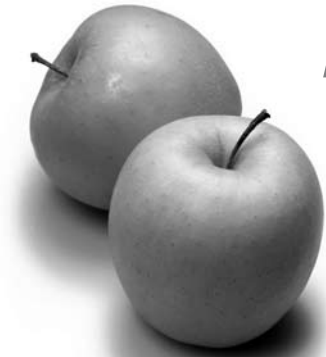
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► **Sue Lidstrom**
Chula Vista Resort
Wisconsin Dells, WI



Not that long ago, a member of our own MPI Chapter lost a courageous battle with a long-term illness. As I looked upon the faces of fellow MPI friends at

Kristen's wake, I was reminded how precious our time on earth really is. As the chapter's liaison for the Women's Leadership Initiative, I want to take this opportunity to discuss women's health issues & the importance of looking after ourselves.

The Women's Health Foundation is a great resource to refer to, with several of our state's female leaders serving on the Board. (Three of whom were panelists at the WLI Luncheon last June). The brain child of Former First Lady of Wisconsin, Sue Ann Thompson, the foundation's focus is on keeping Wisconsin women healthy & safe! www.wwhf.org.

Some cancers or diseases cannot be prevented, despite our best attempts. In fact, you would think that with all the pink ribbons we see everyday (my favorite are the ribbons with the Packer "G" – thanks to Mrs. Deanna Favre!) that breast cancer is our biggest "attacker" as women. According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease claims more women's lives than the next six causes of death COMBINED, about 500,000 lives per year! For those young "whipper-snappers" in our chapter - guess what? It can start to affect women as early as their twenty's! The part that really amazed me is heart disease is mostly preventable. Eating right, exercising 30 minutes/day, avoiding sodium, quitting smoking, and having your cholesterol checked can go a long way in the prevention of this disease.

Besides heart problems, there are a myriad of ailments that can take its toll on us all, women and men alike, yet are preventable with two simple things: avoiding stress & getting enough sleep. Going to bed earlier might be easy enough, but avoiding stress is definitely much harder on those of us in this industry! How do we do it? Who better to ask than our own members! I started collecting advice & got some great suggestions.

First of all, I am starting to think most of our chapter belongs on that "Intervention" show, as the number one answer among us (albeit jokingly) was alcohol! Apparently several of us live by the motto, "I'd rather have a bottle in front of me, than a frontal lobotomy," with some of our "best friends" being Mr. Martini, Margarita, or Mini-Bar?? In moderation, I suppose an occasional sip or two at the end of the day is ok. In fact, one glass of red wine is even heart healthy! Meditation, quiet time, and prayer were also great answers. Other helpful advice:

"I'm an early riser, so I drive up the hill from my home and work out at a fitness center called Slender Lady (Curves on steroids). I work out 3 times a week and by the time I am done, shower and get to work, I remain pretty stress free for the day."

– De DuPlissis, Student

"For instant relief when in a stressful situation & feeling myself building up steam, I think back on the worst experiences in my life. Thankfully, those are few in number but revisiting one of those horrible moments usually gives the current situation much less credence. Turning life's bad moments into learning tools also seems to help lower the incidence of new stressors."

– Kristi Mirocha, Planner for EPIC Creative Communications

"The number one thing that helps me de-stress is exercising at the gym." – Sara Clauder, Marketing for WPS Health Insurance

"I de-stress by taking at least one, non-work related vacation a year to keep my sanity. I also de-stress by attempting to "beat stress": Keeping organized and staying on top of all functions/ events helps a great deal. If I know everything is taken care of ahead of time, I have nothing to stress about."

– Nicole Ziegler, Planner for General Casualty Insurance

"It may sound boring, but 30 minutes of cardio after a stressful day definitely makes me feel better. And I try to laugh as often as possible, especially at myself. I have a folder labeled Funny Stuff on my computer, and open it when I feel the tension rising. Of course, if all else fails, there is always chocolate. And exercising means you can eat it without guilt!"

– Susan Arts, CMP, Planner for S.C. Johnson & Son

And finally, an important MALE perspective:

"I think one of the best ways to de-stress is to make sure everything is in order as much as possible, thus eliminating undue stress. This is easier said than done. On a personal level, I need to keep stress at a minimum because of the effect it has on my blood sugars. Being diabetic, it presents challenges when sugars drop; when this happens it can affect judgment and personality. In order to prevent this, I try and keep stress at a minimum in "clutch" times. I do this by taking walks outside to take myself out of the situation or to just take a break. I also keep a radio on in my office all the time that helps me relax by distracting my thoughts of the work day enough to get through without any issues."

– David Helgeson, CMP, Director of Conventions for Radisson Paper Valley Hotel

Continued on Page 31



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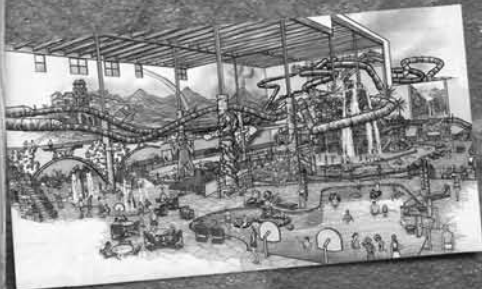
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Jensen Receives Significant Award

► **Steve Lorenz, CMP**
Wisconsin Medical Society
Madison, WI



At the MPI-Wisconsin Chapter's Meeting Expectations symposium on November 10, 2005 Carrie Jensen, CMP, received the Meeting Planner of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Professional Speakers Association (WPSA). This award was presented to Carrie for her "leadership, professionalism, and commitment to the meeting industry in Wisconsin."

Carrie works for Magna Publications and coordinates speakers for their multiple college level programs throughout the United States (in addition to many other duties.) Robert Ian from the WPSA presented the award to Carrie at the end of the general session. Carrie's surprise at winning the award was sincere

and her heartfelt appreciation to both the WPSA and her MPI colleagues was readily apparent.

She was further surprised to find the President of Magna Publications, Bill Haight, and Vice President of Magna Publications, Jody Glynn Patrick, waiting patiently to the side with flowers for the award recipient. Carrie greeted them with hugs and tears and admonished them for having known and not told her.

We at the MPI-Wisconsin Chapter are thrilled to have Carrie as a member of not only the chapter, but as an active volunteer. We're extremely proud of her achievement. Way to go, Carrie! ♦



Carrie Jensen, CMP, center left, is congratulated by (left to right) Jody Glynn Patrick, Magna Publications; Bill Haight, Magna Publications; and Robert Ian, Wisconsin Professional Speakers Association.



Applause, cheers, and even a few happy tears rounded out the celebration!



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Your Donations at Work: The Shaken Baby Association, Inc.

► **Sara Kern**
Abbey Resort Groups
Fontana, WI

► **Susan Kainz**
Wyndham Milwaukee
Center
Milwaukee, WI

This spring, the community outreach committee of MPI - Wisconsin Chapter unveiled a campaign to support The Shaken Baby Association. The efforts were launched with a \$1,000 donation from Marcus Hotels and Resorts to assist with the prevention, identification and detection of shaken baby syndrome. Attendees of the MPI - Wisconsin Education Day held on March 23rd were able to donate online when registering for the event. In addition, donations were collected the day of the meeting held at the Midwest Airlines Center.

Funds collected will be used to assist in the development of educational programs. One successful program includes a public service announcement aired simultaneously in a radio roadblock on 18 Milwaukee area radio stations and replicated in the Madison area. The 60-second spot features a baby crying inconsolably for 50 seconds followed by a voiceover that says, "No matter how much she cries. No matter how tired you are. No matter how frustrated you get. Never, ever shake a baby."

The goal of this ad was to create a spot that would cause people to feel, in a small way, the same sense of frustration that leads

caregivers to shake a baby. SBA wanted listeners to understand that this level of frustration can happen to anyone.

The timing of the radio road block was purposeful, as southeastern Wisconsin had experienced a rash of infant deaths and injuries due to shaking and severe physical abuse. At the time of the radio roadblock, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin had reported 23 instances of shaken baby syndrome since the previous January. After the roadblock, Children's Hospital did not experience any hospital admissions identified as shaken baby syndrome for more than three months.

Thank you to all the MPI - Wisconsin chapter members who contributed to this campaign. Your dollars will make a huge difference. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Susan Kainz at 414-291-4765 susankainz@wyndhammilwaukee.com or Sara Kern, sales manager, The Abbey Resort at 262-275-9082 kern@TheAbbeyResort.com

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Walkie Talkies

► **Carrie Jensen, CMP**
Conference Director
Magna Publications, Inc.
Madison, WI



“Do You Copy?”

In the meetings industry, walkie talkies are as common as cell phones. As a planner, how many times have you been mistaken for a hotel staff member while using your walkie talkie? For me, it's been countless times. When used properly, walkie talkies can be a tangible tool of efficiency. When used improperly, walkie talkies can be a nuisance as well as a hindrance to the success of a program. Here are some basics to consider:

#1: Rent or own: This is more of a budgetary decision, but if you are doing multiple programs per year it is most likely more cost effective to purchase walkie talkies. There are a variety of walkie talkies available ranging from the basic retail/consumer versions to high-end/long-range versions (Motorola and Maxon are both excellent brands for meetings usage.) Consider where you will be using walkie talkies. Transmission can be affected by steel, cement, etc. so I recommend purchasing walkies that have a long range and can be used in a variety of settings. Whatever you think you'll need ... go the next step up. Once you have them, you'll be amazed how frequently you rely on them (as you're leading a group to an off-site venue.)

#2: Just as your mom warned you to never put anything in writing that you wouldn't say in person ... the same applies with walkie talkies. Don't say anything you wouldn't be comfortable with saying in person! Just when you think you're only talking to your colleague about “Mr. Problem speaker,” “Mr. Problem” himself is probably lingering within earshot of your walkie.

#3: Schedule a quick training for staff members to learn the basics of using walkie talkies. Believe it or not, some people are intimidated by using a walkie talkie. Make sure to run through the basics so everyone is comfortable and using the equipment correctly.

#4: Make sure to fully charge walkie talkies before your event, and also each night. After they are fully charged, be sure to test them prior to start of event.

#5: Be sure to press “talk” button BEFORE you start speaking! It seems like common sense, but I can't tell you the number of times I hear “and is that ok?” from the other end of my radio. The best bet is to announce who you are trying to

reach via walkie (i.e., Carrie to Maryann). This helps alert the person you are trying to get in touch with. Once they have responded (“go ahead” is appropriate) you can proceed with talking.

#6: Want to be able to get in touch with your hotel contact at a moments notice? Consider providing them with one of your walkie talkies to use during your event. It's an easy way to keep them involved. Many hotels supply planners with hotel walkies specifically for this purpose.

#7: Consider having a “private” channel for your staff to use. For example, if you have it pre-arranged with your staff that a specific channel # is to be used for private conversations, you can alert them to go “private” and both change your channel to the channel you've designated as private. This way, others won't be privy to your conversations. Keep in mind, this doesn't work 100%! Someone else could be flipping through channels & happen to catch your conversation.

#8: For safety's sake, use them! I remember one of my mentors suggesting I use the walkie as a safety precaution when heading to my sleeping room one night. By simply turning the radio to another channel, it will “squench” and give the appearance that you are connected to “someone of authority” on the other end. Is it fool proof? No, but it sure can give you peace of mind when encountering a stranger in an empty hallway.

#9: Keep to the basics. Use walkies for basic updates & “must have/need to know” type items. Don't use them for personal conversations – not everyone needs to know what you're doing that evening.

#10: If attaching your walkie talking to your clothing, attach it to the front! Although it's typically more comfortable to attach a walkie on your backside, it's almost impossible for you to hear when someone is calling you on the walkie. If you keep it attached in front, it's easier to hear.

#11: Lastly, be respectful of others. When in sessions or having face-to-face conversations with someone, turn your radio off or down. It can be very distracting to others. ♦



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the “food for purchase” scenario on the major airlines. There was a need to cut amenities and start charging for others in an effort to compete with the low-cost airlines. They have found if they offer it, this captive audience will pay for it.

Northwest Airlines recently launched Coach Choice, a new paid seat assignment product designed to provide added choice and comfort, particularly to late-booking business travelers, by saving some preferred coach seat assignments until check-in. For a fee of \$15 per segment, or \$30 for a one way trip with a connection, customers can confirm reserved aisle and exit row seats.

The program is a test, limited to five percent of total domestic seat assignments. The remaining 95 percent of seats remain “free of charge.” Travel Managers should consider updating their

Travel Policy regarding paid seat assignments. Specifically, will your organization reimburse travelers who purchase paid seating? The practice of airlines selling paid seat assignments will probably increase, as carriers continue to look for new revenue streams.

United Airlines, for example, recently started selling upgrades to its roomier Economy Plus seating area in the front of coach to non-elite fliers for prices ranging \$24-\$99 each way or an entire year of access to Economy Plus for \$299. This differs from NW’s new policy in that UA’s policy provides value for roomier seating, while the NW policy will not offer added legroom (except for the exit row seats). Air Canada has had a similar program in place since 2003.

Airline industry expert, Terry Trippler, predicts it’s only a matter of time until the airlines start to

charge not only for food and for advance seat assignments, but also for checked baggage and even carry-on bags. Already, British low-fare carrier Flybe charges passengers about \$3.50 per checked bag — if you book it in advance. It will cost double if you check it without a luggage reservation.

6. More people, fewer seats - airlines cram more fliers into fewer seats.

“Better not tell you now.”

A USA Today analysis shows that the number of scheduled domestic airline seats in December of 2005 was 5% below last year. It means that 3.9 million airline seats offered for sale in December 2004 weren’t in December 2005. That’s 126,000 seats per day.

Meanwhile, the number of travelers has been growing. The Federal Aviation Administration projects 19% more domestic air passengers in 2006 than in 2002.

Yield management, supply and demand. Guaranteed exit row seats; they offer it, we will pay for it.

And last, but certainly not least

7. Consolidated travel management is here to stay.

“Yes, definitely.”

We are in the age of Sarbanes Oxley, of Six Sigma business process improvement, of Intellectual Marketing, of ROO and ROI. The primary catalyst for this is technology and the amazing pace at which it is evolving. The entire travel management process is moving to a web-based environment with online tools that reduce costs, mandate policy, provide exceptional planning platforms, track spend and communicate results that are tied to the strategic goals of the organization.

The Magic 8-Ball, like the travel industry, has been through some tough times. The events of September 11th accelerated eminent

changes in the travel industry. The strong arm of the inept fortune teller accelerated many Magic 8-Balls into a wall. Yet both have emerged restructured, resilient and modernized.

The response from my Magic 8-ball is “Looking Good!” ♦

Note: The Magic 8-Ball® is a toy made by Tyco Toys, Inc.® with legendary fortune-telling power.

Tracy Norum, CMP, is a 20 years veteran of the hospitality industry experience and serves as the Vice President & General Manager at Premier Meetings and Incentives. She has been with Premier for 14 years. Tracy is a proud member of both MPI and SITE and also serves on the Monaco Government Tourist Office Advisory Board. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree, in Communications, Media, and Theatre.

Premier Meetings and Incentives, a division of Fox World Travel, is a full-service meeting and incentive planning company. Premier has worked with hundreds of companies helping them creatively plan, manage and fulfill a great variety of meeting and incentive experiences...once in a lifetime experiences!

Tracy resides just outside of Oshkosh, WI with her artistic husband Larry, two sons, Evan (15) and Lane (12), cat, and dog. When not traveling and experiencing life as it is on all sides of the world, she enjoys spending time with her family at her son’s ball games, antiquing, and at art fairs.



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"As it relates to work, my network of family, friends and industry colleagues are very instrumental in helping me to lower my blood pressure! Like most things in life, you have to first ask for a moment of their time, be willing to be honest with both yourself and them, then(above all), really listen to their responses. And if you do not give of yourself in such a way to help others, don't expect others to be there for you."

— Paul Sienko, Director of Sales for VISIT Milwaukee

Thank you to these members for their honesty & GREAT advice for each of us! As rewarding as our accomplishments, advancements, and accolades can be, always remember to take care of the most important thing first: You! ♦

off while dining or if you have to answer it, quietly say into the phone, "hold on," leave the establishment and have your discussion. I really detest enjoying a nice lobster dinner and listening to someone nearby providing the details of Aunt Bertha's knee operation or office issues or anything else for that matter. And further more, why do people walk into a restaurant of any kind and slam their cell phone down on the table just in case it rings. Will you not hear it in your coat or purse? When I see someone do that it always reminds me of the Old Western movies and the gunslinger sits down to a game of poker in the saloon and slams his gun down on the table.

Ringers

Why do people find the need to set the ringer to play La Cucaracha, Beethoven's Fifth, the Bee Gees or any other annoying melody every time the phone rings? Is it not bad enough that we have the sound of cell phones going off everywhere without having to listen to synthesized nonsense?

Shut them off during public performances, meetings, seminars. Period.

Ear pieces

If you're not on the phone, take them off. You look stupid.

I sat down next to a man in an airport that I thought was

talking to me and continued to answer him only to find after a few strange looks from him that he was talking into an ear piece on the other side of his head and having a discussion with someone on the phone, not me. I made my exit.

Just take the time to take a step back and be aware of your surroundings.

Etiquette may be a hard word to spell, but not a hard thing to do. ♦



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Datebook: Calendar of Events

MAY 16 MPI-CAC and PCMA Joint Educational Program: Leading Into the Future www.mpicac.org	18 Award's Banquet The Osthoff Resort Elkhart Lake, WI www.mpiwi.org	7 MPI-CAC Annual Awards Recognition Event Chicago, IL	26 MPI-CAC 11th Annual Golf Classic Itasca, IL
17 Awards Dinner and Annual Meeting Hilton Minneapolis, MN www.mnmmpi.org	JUNE 2-4 MPI-CAC CMP Exam Weekend Study Review Chicago, IL	21 Golf Event / Leadership Retreat Heidel House Resort Green Lake, WI www.mpiwi.org	JULY 9-11 MPI World Education Congress Dallas, TX



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