

Volume 28, Number 5
September/October 2006

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Humor in the Workplace :)

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



Except for April Fool's Day and the usual jokes exchanged amongst co-workers by the water cooler and via emails, business people tend to take things pretty seriously, maybe too seriously. (*Randy Erickson, Commerce Now, 1995*)

I am a firm believer in finding humor in just about anything that I do, hear, or see. I am not, however, a believer in stress. One of my favorite sayings is "Don't sweat the small stuff." I've learned humor can be a great antidote to all those minor and major irritations we experience on a daily basis.

If you see a co-worker frustrated or stressed, think of something funny to do or say. Dr. Lee Berk, in his article, *Therapeutic Benefits of Laughter*, indicates that a good laugh can lower their blood pressure below normal resting rates and increase oxygen in their bloodstream. However, one big rule of thumb for humor in the workplace, or anywhere for that matter, is to know your audience and make sure your pranks/jokes aren't offensive or hurtful.

Looking for humor

Not a comedian? Don't worry, there is help for the humor-impaired. Slow down, see that there are funny situations all around and feel secure enough to laugh at them. In fact, laugh out loud, and you will be amazed at what it will do for your immediate well-being.

Corporations are continually looking for employees with a good sense of humor. One

characteristic of an effective leader is the ability to be able to laugh at yourself, which is also cited as one of the seven qualities of a great boss. Research has shown that companies which embrace humor have experienced a 21% decrease in staff turnover and a 38% decrease in Friday absenteeism according to University of Wisconsin-La Crosse professor Stu Robertshaw, also known as 'Dr. Humor.'

As for embarrassing moments? I've had a few. Years ago, as a planner, I hired the Beach Boys for an event in Orlando. I had this big plan that when a certain song came

on, one of the hotel banquet staff was to pull a rope to release a netted ballroom ceiling full of beach balls. When the band person gave me the queue, I looked over to where the rope was across the

30,000 sq. ft. ballroom and no one was there. I sprinted to the back of the room, jumped on the rope, swung, nothing happened except that I landed on my better half and one of the sound persons came to my rescue. After the song ended and all dancers had a great time dancing with the beach balls, a band member heckled from the stage that he wondered if anyone saw Tarzan, because he thought he saw Jane land.

Another time at Disney, one of the chefs accidentally started himself on fire at a station which, of course, turned a few of the 700 heads in the room. I told the president of the company that he paid "Big Bucks" for that and it was a surprise. ■

Lighten up ... it's good for business.



MPI-WI

Educational Offerings



► **Carrie Jensen, CMP**
VP Education
Magna Publications
Madison, WI


Upcoming Changes in MPI-WI Educational Offerings!

Fall is almost in the air, and with the change of seasons I've highlighted some educational format changes planned for the upcoming year.

- **November 9, 2006:** Fall Education Day in Madison! Please note this will be the second year of our new MPI hosted education day & tradeshow. Keep in mind this is the only tradeshow that MPI-WI will offer this year. If you thought last year was good, wait until you see what the team is planning for this year! Suppliers and planners alike will NOT want to miss this action-packed day of quality education and networking.
- **December 5, 2006:** Save the date for our Holiday Party in Madison! For the first time, our Holiday Party will coincide with WSAE's December monthly meeting (taking place during the day). This piggy-back effect should help our supplier members of both organizations maximize their time out of the office, while networking with both organizations.
- **March 15, 2007:** Spring Education Day in Racine! Please note our new venue & new format! Based on feedback from our supplier members and host entities regarding their diminishing ROI; and MPI-WI's desire to keep the event fresh, we will not be partnering with Visit Milwaukee's Special Event Showcase. Instead, we will be focusing on a full day of top-quality education. The only tradeshow MPI-WI will offer is November 9, 2006. (See above.)
- **June 2007:** Stay tuned for more information on a potential 2nd Annual Joint Golf Outing with WSAE! 2006 was very successful & the special events team is working diligently on finalizing plans for a spectacular second offering!

Please see our educational calendar at www.mpiwi.org for more information on upcoming events.


If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about our upcoming plans, please contact me directly at 608-227-8118 or via email at carriej@magnapubs.com ■




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President's Column

What to Keep and What to Leave Behind ...

As I write this, I am busy preparing for a move into a new home. The selling, purchase and subsequent activities over the last six months have been a whirlwind. There are only five days left to prepare and six days until it is all over. That is either very scary or exciting, depending on my current frame of mind.

The preparation for a move as I see it, encompasses two main components, packing one's worldly goods and implementing a plan for getting the goods where you want them to go.

The painful process began months ago when we listed our home and the realtor sided with Lori and recommended that some "clutter" should be removed for the sale. So mind you, many of my treasured things have been in storage since late last year and that's precisely when the struggle, internal and external, began.

I am a packrat by nature and have my own methods of filing and storing all of my material possessions. My roommate, Lori, who is much more analytical and minimalist than I, does not understand my compunction to save and store a particular and completely mismatched wine glass that may someday bring about world peace. But I realize removing clutter from one's life is important, so I persevere and sift through all of my belongings to "thin them out" and get rid of the unnecessary.

I am sentimental so determining the future of one's possessions is a daunting task for someone built the way I am. Almost everything I own has a special memory attached to it. How do I decide which of my personal effects will not make the cut? I remember vividly the day we recovered the hand-me-down sofa my parents had surrendered after 13 years and that I have had for 15 more. It is ugly and out of style, I agree! But that day was a blast and one I want to remember. Well, Lori won – the couch goes to the dump the morning of the move.

What about my cassette of 70s dance music? I am sure if I carry it with me and play it in my boom box at every MPI Chapter meeting, membership retention rates will skyrocket. Lori assures me cassette tapes are not going to make a comeback, so I give in yet again.

Then there are all those trade magazines I stash believing they will eventually make me a better instructor at MATC, if only osmosis really worked. I tell myself "someday" I'll have time to read them all and cite specific examples from recent publications, right? Why burden myself with more pressure and constraints on my time. The bonus? Lori will think I am successfully purging when she sees me get rid of all the magazines and it may buy some other item a reprieve later.

I am a traditionalist and not particularly fond of change. I am only eager to move because the house is a) newer, b) closer to friends and family and c) larger. Those of you who know me realize tools and I do not go well together, so newer is good. I am in way over my head with our current 100-year old Victorian home in constant need of repair. I miss having friends and family over regularly, so closer is good. I will be able to spread my unpartable belongings out for better overall accessibility, so larger is good.

I am also a collector. While the difference between a packrat and a collector may be too subtle for many of you, it is a difference nonetheless. I have a large collection of comic books and action figures. While some items are no longer my style, they were at one point and are still somewhat valuable or may be one day. These collectibles take up a significant amount of space in my home, yet I am really proud of my collection.

After boxing and labeling the items we plan to keep and parting ways with the others, however tearful the goodbye, we begin to draft the plan for the actual physical move.

► **Steve Lorenz, CMP**
2006-2007 MPI-WI President
Wisconsin Medical Society
Madison, WI



Helpers? Definitely my family – like they have a choice. Friends? Some expected and a few surprises. Logistics? Throughout the day, I can see the plan will be modified often throughout the day as we complete tasks and encounter setbacks. Sounds like my day job... It promises to be a lot of work, but also a day that will be long remembered.

I want the move to be a success, and yet, fear we might not be ready. By the same token, I am excited that in a few short days, we will be in our new home preparing for new experiences and accumulating more memories.

It occurred to me that moving is a great analogy for many aspects of life. The choice of what to keep and what to leave behind is constant in today's world. Prioritizing time and energy usage is a key survival skill in business. And the people you surround yourself with can make the difference between success and failure.

Your Board of Directors and Committee Chairs have great plans for the year, some of which include setting things aside and others that involve launching new and exciting initiatives. They'll be forming new partnerships and streamlining old processes. While we hope all of these are instant successes, some may need time to mature and take hold.

I can be fearful of change, and must admit, some of the conversations revolving around Blue Ocean Strategies have made me nervous. But then I think about our innovative thinkers, the caliber of our volunteer leadership, our collective ability to rise to the challenges and the possibilities that may soon become a reality for our chapter. I look forward to sharing more about these new ideas with you throughout the year.

Right after I figure out how to sneak this box of memorabilia past Lori and into the new house. ■

2006-2007

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Finances Falling into Place

Fall is here again, and well, another summer has officially passed. As we look forward to the new fiscal year, and the fabulous 2006-2007 MPI-WI educational line-up, I can't help but look back at the financial successes of our chapter. We have lofty goals, but are well-positioned to continue to add value for our members and grow our chapter.

Most recently, we tallied the success of our joint summer event with our friends from WSAE. Whether golfing, boating, or networking – a great time was had by all who attended. While the rain may have soaked the greens, it certainly didn't dampen the spirits of those who attended. And, the best part, we surpassed all of the goals that were set for the event:

- 100 attendees
145 in total participated
- Net \$5,000 profit
EACH organization will net ~\$5,000 to offset ongoing association costs.
- Increase supplier ROI
33 companies and organizations sponsored the event. All sponsors who responded to the survey claimed it was a great ROI for them and indicated they would be interested in sponsoring again.

The summer event was truly a collaborative effort. It is never easy bringing two separate organizations together for a combined effort, but the support from our members and sponsors made it happen. A special thanks to our host – *The Heidel House Resort* – and our sponsors who were key to the success of the 2006 MPI-WI/WSAE summer event!

I encourage you to continue to take advantage of your membership and support our chapter, by attending the upcoming monthly educational programs. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me any time at mibe@foxcities.org or 920-734-3358. ■

► **Mae Ibe**
VP of Finance
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MPI Chapter Exchange Program

► Paulette Heney, CMM, *President-Elect, MPI-WI*

I am very excited to announce that the International Chapter Foundation Special Projects committee has approved the MPI Wisconsin Chapter Grant to move forward with the Exchange Program.

Steve Lorenz and I met with the Special Projects Committee at MPI-WEC in July and after a 45-minute meeting, they approved the grant along with a task. They are hoping to roll this program out internationally within two years, and our chapter along with an international chapter will be the test pilots for the program.

This program is designed to offer cross-border learning and familiarization opportunities for MPI members to improve their international understanding. It also gives individual MPI members the chance to visit MPI chapters abroad and to shadow their international colleagues in the host country.



Photo credit: Marie Johnson

Steve Lorenz, CMP and Paulette Heney, CMM are all smiles for the MPI Chapter Exchange Program

In addition, The MPI Chapter Exchange program will assist in establishing relationships with International MPI chapters and members that we would not have without this program. The program will bring the meeting planning industry together on a new level.

There will be more exciting details about this program if you are interested in becoming a candidate. Stay tuned. ■

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MPI-Wisconsin Chapter

From the Editor's Desk

ENJOY THE JOURNEY

This has been a pivotal year for me. Perhaps the most significant change was the turn of the digits. While the number 1 in and of itself is not a big number – “39” versus “40” is! So in preparation, I started to gear up mentally and physically late last year. I wanted to believe the cliché, “you are only as old as you think and feel you are,” and prove it true.

Instead of just setting a few New Year's resolutions that might survive a couple of weeks or a month, if I were lucky, I set a whole year's worth of new things to try, adventurous experiences to be had, and accomplishments to be completed.

The year got off to a steady start. The Sunday before Martin Luther King's holiday, I joined 30,000 ambitious (and crazy) participants in running the P.F. Chang's Rock & Roll ½ and Full Marathon in Phoenix, AZ. In February, I made a bold move and got a discreetly placed tattoo added to my person. I am an Aries baby so in March, I invited all of my 40-year old friends to come and party with me like we were all still 29.

I could go on, but what is more important is that I realized like diets and New Year's resolutions – it is not just about setting up a timetable of to-do's and checklists. It is much more about creating the life you want to live each and everyday and learning to

enjoy the journey as much, if not more, than the destination.

In July, I had another couple of celebrated firsts. I assumed my editor role for the Agenda newsletter and attended my first MPI-WEC Conference. Over 3,000 members attended

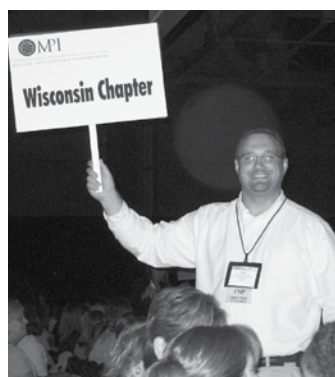


Photo credit: Marie Johnson

Dave Helgeson, CMP, Radisson Paper Valley Hotel, helps our chapter attendees find their seat at the opening ceremony.

the 2006 MPI World Education Congress July 9-12, 2006. I had heard so many good things about MPI-WEC and had set my expectations high. I am happy to report, I was not disappointed! Our Wisconsin Chapter should be very proud, in that we had 35 chapter members in attendance. It was nice to have such a strong showing.



Photo credit: Marie Johnson

A large collection of Wisconsin Delegates attend the opening ceremony.

► **Marie Johnson**
Midwest Airlines
Milwaukee, WI



In Alison Barta's column in the July/August Agenda, she cited along with top notch education, WEC offers outstanding networking events, a feel for the local culture and a chance to see the wonderful things our fellow MPI members can do. Very few of us get the opportunity to be a part of such an outstanding event. She said “one of the most memorable moments of last year's opening session for her was hearing from the International award winners. As a newcomer to the industry, it is great to hear that the sky really is the limit.”

This issue is full of articles submitted by industry professionals and chapter members that are reaching for the sky. Maybe they are encouraging a new perspective, like humor in the workplace or a fresh start on getting the most of your member benefits. Perhaps they are strengthening their communities through local businesses or making more personal contributions. And, let's not forget our fabulous line-up of monthly educational meeting highlights and professional tips provided by our upcoming speakers.

A recurring theme you will read throughout the pages of the Agenda is to get involved and make a difference. Personal challenges have been extended by a number of our writers, I encourage you to accept them. ■



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Communicating so people WANT to listen

► **Stacey Hanke**
1st Impression Consulting
November Education Day
Speaker



When you speak, do people WANT to listen? Do you ever wonder why you struggle with getting your listeners to take action? Do you ramble and lose your focus? Whether you're in a meeting, sales call, exhibiting or presenting, you need a strategy for preparing a message that gets results.

It's critical that your introduction grabs the attention of your listener. The greatest challenges I hear are, "I never know how to start and end my message." "I tend to ramble." "Once I get started I'm ok." This last statement frightens me. It sounds like you're saying, "Don't listen for the first two minutes. Wait until I get going. Then it really gets good."

Clarify your objective

Clarifying your objective is the first step to communicating a clear and concise message that gets to the point and gets your listener to take action. Avoid beginning your message with the statement, "What I would like to talk about today is ..." The fact is, 99% of the time, your listener will know why they have been asked to meet with you. Instead of using this long "filler" statement, an effective communicator is able to get their point across in 45 seconds or less.

How you accomplish this is with your objective, which sets the tone for your message if it's delivered with impact. To guarantee you grab your listener's attention, follow this process when designing openings and closings:

1. Influence your listener and build trust by sharing how you feel about your topic. Without this step, your listener will be confused about how you feel and what you're asking them to do. "To stay ahead of the competition, it's important you apply the proper closing to a sale." The word important is your perspective.
2. Specifically communicate to your listeners what you want done and you will increase the chances they'll take action.
 - A general action step states what you want your listeners to do while they're physically present during your message. "Stay open and explore opportunities."
 - To get action from your listeners, they need to walk away with a clear understanding of what you're asking them to do. "Sign up for a free demonstration today."
3. Let your listener know what's in it for them. When you show the benefits of taking action, you increase the chances that they'll do it. Benefits are the most persuasive element to your message. "When you sign up today, you'll begin to receive immediate tools for increasing profits and expanding your clientele."

It's a well-known fact that we remember the first and last thing we hear. Therefore, it's critical every message is organized to convey a powerful opening and closing.

Unclutter your language

It's one thing to choose and organize specifically what you want to say; the real, um, challenge is when you, uh, need to deliver your message, OK. Like, you may be familiar, you know, with words that, uh, clutter our language. We tend to use non-words when we don't know what to say. Writing this article with non-words would be extremely distracting to read. We don't write with non-words; why do we speak with them? The most powerful skill you possess is the ability to pause and take a relaxing breath. When you replace non-words with a pause, you'll speak in shorter sentences and quickly get to the point. There are powerful benefits when you incorporate pauses at the end of your sentences.

- When you lose your train of thought, express a key point or ask a question.
- Think on your feet and gather your thoughts to avoid rambling.
- Have time to take a relaxing breath, appear comfortable and gain control of your message.
- Your listener has time to hear and understand your message.
- You'll keep your listeners attention and they'll take action.

When your message is cluttered with non-words, you're perceived with a lack of knowledge or an inability to perform your job. I challenge you to begin listening to your voicemail messages before you hit the send button. Ask a co-worker or family member to bring to your attention when you use non-words. Practice using pauses when you're passing out handouts in meetings, referring to brochure pieces while exhibiting or when you're referring to notes. Before long, you'll increase your awareness and begin saying less with greater impact. And isn't that what communication is all about? Speaking so people want to listen. ■





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Planner

Profile: Tanya Meyer



► **Tanya Meyer**
Meeting Planner
Humana, Inc.
Green Bay, WI

How long in the meetings industry?

6 years involved with meeting planning; 10 years in the insurance industry.

How long in MPI?

Brand new – June 2006.

Tell us about your company and/or position:

Humana Inc. headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, is one of the nation's largest publicly traded health benefits companies. Our meeting planning team plans over 1,200 meetings each year.

There are currently eight Humana Meeting Planners reporting to Connie Nau, CMP. (Connie and my seven co-workers are also active members in MPI.)

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

I'm not sure what my MPI areas of interest are just yet, but I'm looking forward to my new role whatever it may be.

Favorite Musical Group:

I don't have a favorite, but I'm a lover of country music – both new and old (especially old, classic country like Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, Elvis and Dolly.)

Family:

Married (to my high-school sweetheart) no children, but we have a 1½ year old Papillon puppy.

Where were you born?

Born and raised in Green Bay, WI. Spent 6 years living in Dallas, TX, before moving back to marry my high-school sweetheart.

Where do you currently live?

Green Bay, WI.

Favorite Pastimes:

Enjoying every spare moment at my cottage in Athelstane, WI with my husband, our dog and our friends/family.

Person you admire most and why:

Since I have a puppy ... my favorite person right now is Cesar Millan, the Dog Whisperer! If his methods work on my naughty puppy — Cesar will be my HERO :)

Dream Vacation:

Any vacation!!!

If I won the lottery I would:

Retire, throw a HUGE party and move to my cottage.

Words to live by:

Take time to remember and appreciate the important things in your life.

The 4 Reaction Styles to Change v 2.0

► Jay Gubrud
Professional Speaker
Jay Gubrud Inc
Roseville, MN



I believe that to be in control of the change process, it is important to know how you respond to change. There are four major response modes or reactions to change. In my opinion, we each have a dominant response mode, meaning we usually respond in this mode but can also respond in others, depending on the circumstances.

You have probably heard that your biggest asset is also your biggest weakness. I believe this concept also applies to our response modes to change. Take, for example, an accomplished person who is very forceful and direct. These traits let them get a lot done. At the same time, they may have squelched others or damaged relationships because of their “bulldozer” approach. This is not to say their traits are right or wrong, they just are. It is important to know your reaction style and the pluses and minuses of your style so that you can be in the driver’s seat of your professional development.

1. Nose to the grindstone:

The great thing about “nose to the grindstone” people is that they get busy when change happens. They close the door and get to work. The thing to keep in mind if you are or manage a “nose to the grindstone” person is that they tend to use the same strategies that got them to their current position. So it is important for this personality to expose themselves to new ways of doing things. This might involve talking to peers within your company or an association you belong to, taking a class or seminar to learn new skills or reading a book. Some specific examples include:

- Use a web search engine to find meetings, events, articles and other resources in and for your industry.
- Attend a local or national association meeting in your industry.
- Ask someone you respect for a book they recommend and read it!
- Hire a trainer or speaker on a topic your employees could benefit from.
- Ask a peer who you look up to for suggestions on what areas you could improve in.

2. Gossip

The nice thing about these folks is that they are talking about change. In my opinion, it is healthy to talk about the change going on and to acknowledge what is happening to employees or members. Otherwise we are just ignoring the obvious. The challenge with “gossip” people is that they can damage the company or association if they don’t preface their comments correctly. For example they might say, “Management was wrong,

they should have done (blank,)” or “That was a stupid thing to do,” or “If they were smart they would have put Wendy in charge.” All these statements can be damaging and undermine unity. “Gossip” folks, (actually, these can be used by any person,) can use these simple prefaces to express themselves without damaging others:

- I believe
- I feel
- In my opinion

They can make themselves right without making others wrong. Let me give you a car example. If I say that Ford makes the best pickup trucks, can we dispute that? Yes - we can look at purchase price, payload, resale value, horsepower and the list goes on. If I say, in my opinion Ford makes the best pickup trucks, can we dispute that? No, because that is my opinion and everybody has opinions. Using these statements keeps defense mechanisms down, which allows for people to be more productive when working together.

3. Deer in headlights:

This personality just gets stuck when change comes along or things get tough. They get paralyzed. They are so used to the way things used to be that they aren’t exactly sure how they fit in to the new circumstances. The nice thing about this personality is that they aren’t damaging the organization. They are just stuck. If you or someone you supervise has this trait, the solution is simple. Create a plan. This requires asking for help, however, so approach someone who is very methodical and good with plans. If you need to accomplish something in a month, then lay out what do you need to do each week and what needs to happen each day. The funny thing about this type of person is that once you get started, it’s not as hard as you thought it would be. Here is an example of what very successful financial planner that I know uses, on a daily basis, to keep on task. You can customize this to fit your situation.

LIFE PLAN BY LEE STOERZINGER Date: _____
www.leestoerzinger.com

- A. Learn one new topic about my business**
- B. Write one excellent article for “The Envisionary” (his newsletter)**
- C. Hand out cards, newsletters or write to someone**
- D. Work on one part of the strategic plan**
- E. Set 3 appointments**

Priorities for the day:

- 1.
- 3.
- 5.
- 7.
- 9.
- 2.
- 4.
- 6.
- 8.
- 10.

4. New job:

It is normal for change to happen. It may be time for someone to take a different position or leave the company/association. If you have a pond of water with no way for fresh water to get in or old water to leave, what happens? It stinks. It stagnates and dies. Haven't you ever worked with someone who fits those descriptions? It is normal for people to take on new things and let old ones go. While there is loss with change, in the long run it is very normal and healthy.

Making a change in position, department, or company is not a bad thing if it is done for the right reasons. Too often I see people leave a company dissatisfied, only to end up in the same situation at another company a year or two down the road. Much of this, in my opinion, revolves around one's expectations about their job and company. On the other hand, if the environment that you are currently in doesn't seem to be a good fit, then making a move can be an invigorating step in the right direction.

According to Jake Gibbs of Legacy Frontiers, legacyfrontiers.com, people tend to be unhappy in their job when they are not engaged. There are two questions to ask yourself if you feel disengaged: 1) Are you rusted out? 2) Are you burned out?

These are two leading causes to disengagement and ultimately decrease satisfaction on the job.

As a rule of thumb, unless the situation is unhealthy, you may want to try to leverage your investment in your current job. Many companies support career webbing or career development within the company. This can also be a great opportunity to rediscover your talents and shoot for that raise you have been looking for.

If you are in an unhealthy work environment or feel like you might have reached your limitations where you are at, here is an excellent site with articles to help you make that decision: http://www.quintcareers.com/career_change_resources.html. You may also need to seek out someone to provide objective counsel to get the career exploration started and find what is truly right for you! ■

About the Author:

For over nine years, Jay Gubrud has helped corporations, associations, their boards and members eliminate roadblocks to their success. His theme is very unique and one everybody can relate to – Cars and Driving! Jay's articles on performance improvement have been in numerous publications nationwide. You can reach Jay at www.jaygubrud.com and 651-635-9939.

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Food for **THOUGHT**

Submitted by Susan Kainz, Grand Geneva

► **Michael Dunn**

Executive Chef
Wyndham Milwaukee Center



While most 12-year-olds were out kicking up dust in little league, Michael Dunn was elbow-deep in suds – scrubbing dishes, awash in the flurry of activity and creativity of a popular restaurant near his childhood home. From his first night in that kitchen, Dunn was determined to be a chef. Something about the excitement, the camaraderie, and the teamwork that chefs inspire in the kitchen led him to where he is today.

Throughout high school, Dunn worked in numerous restaurants, exposing him to a variety of foods and cooking styles. Ultimately, his passion carried him to the Culinary Institute of America. Since graduating from the Culinary Institute at the age of 20, Dunn has dished out stellar cuisine and executive know-how for several four-star, four-diamond properties including Wheatleigh Hotel in Lenox, Mass.; Caneel Bay Resort in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands; and Hotel Crescent Court in Dallas, Texas.

Dunn has significant experience working with the media and making public appearances. While at Hotel Phillips in Kansas City, MO, he co-hosted a radio show with baseball Hall of Famer George Brett on WHB-AM. At the Wyndham Milwaukee Center, Dunn frequently offers his culinary expertise and tips on the local television morning

shows and regularly makes appearances on behalf of the Hotel at local markets and charity events.

When asked about his career highlights, Dunn mentions preparing a special dinner with Charlie Trotter, famous Chicago chef and owner of the upscale restaurant *Charlie Trotter's*, as a night that stands out. He also enjoyed being the first American chef to work in a brand new kitchen in France, where he completed a 'stage' (French internship) immediately after school. Dunn noted that his latest highlight is still in the works, as he prepares to open the new restaurant this fall at the Wyndham Milwaukee Center.

With a focus on style, comfort and options, this restaurant will bring the "small plate revolution" to Milwaukee, offering a true mix of American and coastal cuisine in proportions perfect for sharing and savoring. Chef Dunn has put together a visionary and unique menu for the city's newest restaurant that will tempt and tantalize the adventurous palate in a simple, artful setting.

For a taste of what will be featured on the new menu, Chef Dunn would like us to try one of his light and flavorful new entrees.

Enjoy! ■

Seared Diver Scallop, Warm Parsnip, Butternut Squash Potato Salad

2 ea – U 10 scallops	1 ear of corn roasted cut of the cob
2 oz – corn oil	4 ea – baby creamer potatoes
kosher salt, fresh ground pepper	1 oz – Chardonnay
2oz – whole butter softened	½ of a large shallot sliced very thin
2oz – green beans cut in 1/2	1tsp. of finely chopped fresh herbs
2oz – butternut squash peeled & medium diced	(parsley, chives, thyme,) equal amounts of all three
2oz – parsnip peeled & medium diced	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Take the potatoes and rub them with a little of the corn oil. Season with salt & pepper. Put in a baking pan and place in a preheated 350 degree oven. Bake till they are fork tender and remove from the pan. Set aside for final plating. Heat a medium sauté pan over medium high heat, using ½ of the remaining corn oil. Heat the oil in the hot sauté pan till the oil ripples. Season the scallops with salt & pepper; carefully place the scallops in the hot pan. Allow the scallops to cook not moving them for about 2 ½ minutes. You will notice that the edges of the scallop will start to get golden at this point. Turn the scallops over. Let cook for about 1½ minutes then take ½ the amount of the butter and place in the pan with the scallops. Turn off the heat but leave the pan on the burner for about 2 more minutes. The butter does two things — it aids in the colorization and it will enhance the flavor of the scallops.

At the same time as the scallops are cooking, heat up another sauté pan over med.-high. Using the remaining oil in the warm pan, sweat the shallots for about 1 min. then add the corn, ¼d potatoes, parsnips, butternut squash, and green beans. Continue to cook the mixture till it gets hot. Season the mixture and then add the Chardonnay. Cook for another 2 minutes so that the alcohol cooks out. Remove the pan from the heat. Add in the fresh herbs and the remainder of the butter. Toss the warm salad mixture quickly so that the butter gets incorporated evenly. Taste to check seasoning. Adjust according. Final plating place warm salad in the center of the plate, place the scallop on top of the salad.

*** Optional– Take a little of the butter that is left in the pan and spoon a little over the scallop.



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Be An A-Level Player!

► **Simon T. Bailey**
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In the not-so-distant future, people will be promoted, compensated, and celebrated for their innovation as opposed to their duration with a company. In fact, the future may be here already!

Companies are revisiting and redefining their ideas about which employees are “high potential keepers.” A-level Players are the men and women who’ve proven their relevancy to the organization through their innovation, insight and performance. Organizations prize A-Level Players because they are adaptable – they can move to other areas of the company and add value. B-Level Players have demonstrated some potential, but their productivity is inconsistent. And C-Level Players are those who’ve sat on their blessed assurances like frogs in a pot of water on the fire...they can sense that the environment is heating up, but they don’t have the desire or the urgency to do something to save their skins.

In the past, workforce reductions typically involved C-Level employees. But in today’s do-more-with-less business environment, more often than not, B-Level Players are being shown the door.

Just this week, John, a friend of mine told me a compelling story. As he walked into his office one morning, his manager asked to speak with him – privately! His boss gave John the good news that he’d just received a substantial bonus. However, the boss then went on to explain that, effective that very same day, the organization was undergoing RIF actions (Reductions in Force) and that John’s counterpart in the department was being let go.

Now, that may not seem like a terribly interesting story...until I tell you that John has only been with the organization for six months (and earned a sizable bonus), while his counterpart had been there five years (and received a pink slip.) Furthermore, in the performance review John received just the week before, his manager noted that John: brought best-practice methods to the department and the organization, saved the company money, identified potential revenue streams, and assisted other co-workers and departments in meeting their goals. Sounds to me like John is an A-Level Player! And what about his counterpart who was let go? John described her as a great person and someone who was a team player, completed tasks on time and did what she was asked to do. In other words, she was a B-Level Player.

Friends, let me put the truth on the table: Being a “good” employee or manager simply isn’t enough anymore! Now, let me ask you: Which type of player are you today? Which type of player do you aspire to be? The hard truth is that most people are B-Level Players. And that’s okay – do you know why? Because you can change! With a sharpening of your skills, a change in your mindset and an adjustment of your focus, you can become an A-Level Player. Furthermore, due to differences in objectives, roles

and responsibilities, someone who is a B-Level Player in one organization might be an A-Level Player in another. It’s all about the right fit.

If you want to move up in your organization, make more money, earn some recognition and achieve a sense of accomplishment, then rid yourself of all forms of mediocrity. If you spend much of your time looking busy or important in front of the boss, or politicking for advancement or a bigger bonus, you might want to rethink what you’re doing. Otherwise, before long, you may be looking for another job.

A-Level Players are relevant. They are entrepreneurial-minded in all they do. High potential people are the CEOs of their jobs – they take ownership and make things happen instead of waiting to be told what to do. A-Levels players have radical insight and ask, “What if?” or “Is there a better way to achieve the goal?” They think strategically and innovatively about ways to generate revenue, save money and create efficiency. And finally, top-notch employees and leaders follow the same forward-thinking principle as the great hockey player Wayne Gretzky, who said: “I skate to where the puck is going to be, not to where it is.”

How can you become an A-Level Employee?

1. Identify ways to make or save the organization money.
2. Propose a better way of completing a task or process.
3. Determine how you can integrate the various “hats you wear” into a strategic role that touches several parts of the organization.
4. Raise your hand and take on the project that no one else wants.
5. Execute consistently – follow up and follow through. Don’t allow projects to die on the vine.

How can you become an A-Level Manager?

1. Coach your A-Level Employees for retention, your B-Level Employees for performance, and your C-Level Employees to find their happiness elsewhere.
2. Teach your team how the finances work in your organization. Enhance their financial intelligence so they can contribute to the bottom line.
3. Give a portion of your bonus to those staff members who assist you in achieving your goals. (I suppose HR might shoot down this idea because C-Level Employees could cry discrimination...oh well, it was a good thought. Laugh ... I did.)

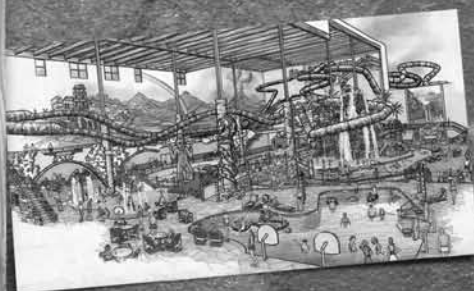
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MPI Members

Making a Difference

► **Marie Johnson**
Midwest Airlines
Milwaukee, WI

In my short term as editor for the Agenda newsletter, I continue to be amazed at the talent and potential of our MPI-Wisconsin Chapter members. A few months ago, one of our MPI friends let me know of a member in our ranks that is generating some pretty extraordinary results in an everyday ordinary way.

While we have our Supplier and Planner Profiles for new members, we don't have a dedicated section to showcase our seasoned and veteran members that are making a difference inside and outside of our association. However, I was intrigued and thought it might be nice to feature a member and their accomplishments. I interviewed Marlena Deutsch, the Assistant Director of Outreach & Project Management for United Way of Dane County back in June of this year.

I learned she has been a member of the MPI-Wisconsin Chapter since the summer of 2004 and has been working with United Way of Dane County for the past 2 ½ years. And, I have to admit, at the onset of our conversation, you couldn't mistake her passion and dedication to her community and the people she serves.

She said "the great thing about United Way is that we are focused on making lasting solutions for the community." Their mission is to unite and focus the community to create measurable results in improving people's lives and strengthening their community. Everything they do advances the community's Agenda for Change. They asked the community what mattered most and it came down to seven focus areas: Education matters. Children matter. Health matters. Housing matters. Independence matters. Safety matters. Volunteers matter.

Back in June, they launched the Latino Advisory Report and worked with local and institutional leaders to create a snapshot of what life is like for Latino's working and living in Dane County. The project was timely and important as they are seeing the Latino population growing.

United Way of Dane County is a local organization and is focused on creating lasting solutions. As United Ways across the country shift to creating a local, lasting impact, the Dane County organization is leading the way, thanks in part to a project called Schools of Hope. Back in 1995, research revealed the reading gap between white and black students in Madison was over 20%. The school district was spending millions of dollars to decrease the gap, but it was only getting worse. By the 3rd grade, children read to learn – so they need the reading skills by then to succeed in school. Leaders and the community came together to institute Schools for Hope. They received help from U.W. Wisconsin to conduct research to gain insights. They learned that just reading one on one could really make a difference. So they had a "Call for Readers" in the Wisconsin State Journal and over 700 people responded. What started out as a Civic Journalism project led to over 1,000

volunteers working in concert with teachers helping kids learn to read. In October of 2004 a follow-up study was conducted and there was no longer a gap.

In her role, Marlena gets to plan all the special events (outreach), about 12-15 annually ranging from 30 all the way to 750 in attendance. The events can be informal or large, full-scale celebratory events. Each event talks about the progress United Way of Dane County is making on the Agenda for Change. When we talked, she was planning for United Way's Days of Caring. For that event, they have over 2,100 volunteers. Its member businesses



From left to right: Chuck Cedergren, Ann Cedergren, Veronica Williams, and Bettina Billings

Photo was taken by a staff member.

allow their employees to do volunteer projects like helping seniors remain independent or working to help all children be successful before they start school. She is definitely excited to come to work everyday and make a difference. She said "don't under-estimate the power of non-profit meeting planning and the people they are able to bring to the table to come up with solutions."

Last year, United Way of Dane County exceeded their goal and raised \$14.8 million for lasting solutions in the community. On August 29 they held their Days of Caring & Campaign Kickoff Event to celebrate 45 years of local partnership and giving.

When asked about her interests outside of work, she likes to travel and read. She teaches a fitness class called Nia. Nia is a holistic cardio-vascular or fitness fusion – dance, martial arts and healing arts.

Get involved with your community. Even volunteering one hour of your time can really make a difference for yourself and your community. Everyone is busy, but we can really make a difference.

To learn more about United Way of Dane County visit www.unitedwaydaneconomy.org or contact Marlena at marlenad@uwdc.org. ■

Teambuilding for Fun & Profit

"You can learn more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation." — Plato

► **Sharon Fisher**
IdeaSparker
August Speaker



Teambuilding ... the buzz word of business today! Other management philosophies – TQM, Six Sigma, MBWA – have faded, but teambuilding stands the test of time because no business can succeed without cohesive teams.

Meetings by nature are the perfect place to inspire relationships and build teams! They provide a relaxed setting, bring together people from all areas of the business and create the opportunity to stimulate a change in perspective. But exactly what is teambuilding, and how do we incorporate it?

A team is by definition a group of people, usually from a variety of backgrounds, brought together to achieve a specific task or purpose. A highly effective team has a clear understanding of its goal, is able to combine the skills and experience of its members to create a result that is greater than the group might have achieved working as individuals.

So teambuilding is ANY act or activity that helps build the team. It can be something as simple as a quick game done during a stretch break to liven up a meeting, or as elaborate as a full day set of challenges led by a trainer to incorporate management concepts.

Teambuilding events take numerous forms. To some, it is a high adventure ropes course of the Outward Bound kind, while to others it is a playful Wacky Olympics. No matter how you define it, all teambuilding programs are designed to bring individuals together and encourage team interaction.

The goal is to get people to go beyond collaboration and beyond cooperation to a relationship where each person manages to increase the abilities of the collective, and the collective somehow manages to increase the abilities of the individual. It happens when you discover that someone is actually listening to you without judging you. Where you feel free to share ideas without ridicule. Where each person feels that they made a significant contribution. Where your contributions are evaluated – but not you personally. Where everyone not only believes in the mission, but in each others abilities to realize that mission. ■



Sharon is President of Play with a Purpose, a leading international teambuilding company that specializes in custom designing events to meet your goals. They may be reached at 407-872-3838, or www.playwithapurpose.com.

TIPS FOR TEAMBUILDING SUCCESS

1. Think before you plan or buy. Know what you are trying to accomplish before selecting an event. Is your goal simply fun and interaction? Or are there underlying issues (merger of two companies, communication issues, sales strategies, etc.) that you are attempting to resolve? Define your objectives.
2. Focus on positive outcomes. Design/choose events that allow everyone to have input and be successful. Events should use a variety of skill sets and talents.
3. Recognize the vast demographics, psychographics, job levels, experiences and encounters that will influence how your guests participate. For instance, in elementary school they might not have been chosen until last, or they might be physically out of shape, or they may be an introvert. Consider all these in the selection/design process.
4. Start where your group is and work up. Pick appropriate activities for the acceptance level and mood. If you just acquired another company in a hostile take-over, a really up event may not be appropriate.
5. Think small bursts if you are short on time. Don't rule out teambuilding because you don't have a complete half-day window of time. Blend it into general sessions, break-outs, meals and parties.
6. Use 'serious sports' sparingly. It is no fun to play a skilled sport if you are not skilled. Consider modifying them to allow the non-skilled athlete to participate.
7. Consider weather and location. Have a back-up planned. Blend the unique traits of the area you are visiting into the event.
8. Use your theme. Tying the teambuilding to the overall message will allow it to have greater punch.
9. Safety first. Putting your team in danger needs to be a carefully thought out option.
10. Remember the goal ~ to create bonds between employees so they know they can count on each other. Measure all events against this goal.
- 10.5 If it's not fun, don't do it!

A FRESH Start

► **Susan Arts, CMP**
VP of Member Care
SC Johnson & Son, Inc.
Racine, WI



It doesn't matter how long I've been out of school, September always signals a fresh start for me. It brings back memories of shopping for school supplies, nights getting cooler, and summer vacation becoming a distant memory. I still find myself refocusing and looking to the year ahead. What are some of my challenges? What do I want to accomplish?

Now, in addition to asking those questions about my job, I am also asking them about the chapter. As your Vice President of Membership, what are some of my challenges, and the challenges of the Membership Team? What do I want to see us accomplish this year – as a Board, Team and Chapter?

Challenge #1: Increase membership by 3% (11 new members). Our chapter membership has grown by almost 30% over the last four years, and as of the end of May, we had 361 members. How do we continue that expansion? Every chapter member is, in their own way, a salesperson for the organization. When you meet new people in the industry, do you ask them if they are a member of MPI? Do you share meeting notices with your co-workers and boss? The chapter has a recruitment team that is working on formulating campaigns to increase membership, but it is the networking we all do that will spread the word about MPI.

My challenge to you is to talk about MPI with your industry peers. Instead of getting together for lunch, invite them to a chapter meeting. You still get the lunch, along with some top-notch education.

Challenge #2: Maintain a retention rate of 78%. Our chapter has one of the highest retention rates in the world, consistently in the top 10%. Our members see the value in continuing, and our retention team does an excellent job of contacting people whose memberships are coming up for renewal.

My challenge to you is to make renewing your membership a “no brainer.” Put it in your budget, and make sure you can tell your boss (or yourself) what your MPI membership means for your continued professional development.

Challenge #3: Achieve a 55% planner participation rate on the MPI Skills Assessment. This is one of the newest tools available only to MPI members. It is designed to assist you in planning your career by assessing your current skills and plotting them against different positions within the meeting planning arena. You are able to see where your current strengths and weaknesses are, and how you can improve your skills to make it to the next level.

My challenge to you is to take the Skills Assessment! As of the end of June, Wisconsin was third overall with a 45% completion rate. And if you take the Skills Assessment, you also gain access to CultureActive, a new “cool tool” available only to MPI members. (See the MPI website to get more information – mpiweb.org)

Challenge #4: Work with the Special Events division on improvements to Awards Banquet process. Each year, the chapter recognizes the volunteers and their outstanding contributions at the May Awards Banquet. We are currently evaluating the Awards process to increase participation by all chapter members. The Awards currently given out include Planner and Supplier of the Year, Rising Star, Industry Advocate, Hall of Fame, and Team of the Year. The chapter also has scholarships available for members to use for continuing their professional development.

My challenge to you is to provide feedback and ideas. Ask yourself the following questions, and send your answers to me at sarts@scj.com:

- Why haven't I nominated someone for a chapter award?
- What would motivate me to nominate someone?
- Why haven't I applied for a scholarship to continue my professional development?

Challenge #5: Develop a chapter leadership succession plan. Succession planning is done by organizations all the time, but presents special challenges for a volunteer association. By developing a leadership succession plan, we can ensure the good works of the chapter continue and grow, and that sudden changes don't become a crisis. In order to develop a plan that has depth, we need to constantly recruit new volunteers and encourage their progression up the chapter leadership ladder.

My challenge to you is to look at your chapter involvement on a long-term basis. If you are a current team member, ask yourself if you want to move up into a team lead position. If you are a team leader, ask yourself if you want to move up to the Board. If you are on the Board, ask yourself if you want to track for President. And if you aren't currently volunteering, ask yourself WHY NOT? Once you have thought about it, contact me! I want to start filling in all the steps on the ladder, so that the success of the chapter continues.

As you can see, there are many challenges ahead, but they all have one thing in common. They require YOUR involvement – as an MPI salesperson, as a volunteer, as an engaged member. This can't be done by one person; it needs to be a team effort. With your contributions, we will meet all these challenges over the next year. ■

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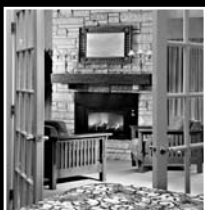
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Simon T. Bailey is a Catalyst for Brilliance, inspirational speaker and author of four books. This article contains excerpts from his latest book, Release Your Brilliance. To sign up for his free Brilliant Carats ezine, order books, or contact Simon, visit www.SimonTBailey.com.



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The Seasons of Networking

► **Michael J. Hughes**
NetworkingForResults.com
October Speaker



Networking is a social activity. As such, it ebbs and flows in tune with the annual business calendar. Many professionals lose sight of the annual business cycle and how it fluctuates, often dictating the pace and productivity of networking. Check out the list below and reflect on how it has affected your efforts. Then use the information as you prepare for the next quarter.



First Quarter (Jan/Feb/Mar). This part of the annual cycle is a little slow out of the gate. Don't expect much activity on an individual or group level for the first part of January. Most people, even the most successful professionals, seem to suffer from the "Holiday Hangover" until mid-to-late January. Events are not usually well-attended until early February when people get caught up from the December layoff.

Groups generally shift into high gear during February, then hit a hiccup as the annual March Break hits. Most groups tend to meet before or after this short holiday period as many professionals and entrepreneurs schedule a holiday where it's a little warmer. Keep this fact in mind as many marketing plans are delayed or go off-track because of this (seemingly) sudden obstacle.

First Quarter Networking Success Strategy. Make sure you emphasize any major self-marketing effort for February. This will maximize your impact on the group. Expect delays in any project or relationship-building exercise that extend into March. You may not be taking a holiday at this time, but most successful entrepreneurs and professionals do.



Second Quarter (Apr/May/June). The business cycle builds at this time of year. Most professionals increase their quantity and quality of networking activity during this three-month span. Networking groups move into high gear and membership attendance at functions is usually high. This timeframe also includes additional group activities such as trade shows, conferences and special events. This is an opportune time to create new contacts and leverage involvement through efforts such as group presentations or sponsorship of events.

Second Quarter Networking Success Strategy. This is a high-activity segment in the annual cycle. Use it to develop new contacts and expand your network. Take advantage of any marketing opportunities as they will have maximum impact. There is a danger of losing control as activity builds. Utilize a follow up structure that keeps you in touch and helps stay on track.



This Quarter (July/Aug/Sept). Many professionals hit the proverbial wall at this time of year. They are not prepared to shift gears as our society slows to a crawl in mid-June. Most networking groups shut down for the Summer, the exception being a group barbecue or golf tournament. Most professionals will lose about a month of momentum in their business cycle: a week before they leave, gone two weeks then a week catching up when they get back. This mindset stays in place until the second week in September when everyone wakes up for the Fall rush.

Third Quarter Networking Success Strategy. Summer networking becomes a one-on-one activity that takes a holistic approach. Use innovative and leisure-oriented activities as networking efforts. Focus on the personal aspect of colleague conversations to build stronger relationships. And be ready for when the switch turns on September 15th.



Fourth Quarter (Oct/Nov/Dec). This is known as the "Golden Quarter" in the business world. It actually starts in mid-September when people come out of the Summer doldrums. The focus is now on business until mid-December. Networking groups work at full speed with many events and functions filling the calendar. Like the second quarter, there is usually a host of networking opportunities. This changes again in early December as most people begin their Christmas schedule. The talk again turns to personal issues and family agendas take over.

Fourth Quarter Networking Success Strategies. Be ready for the sprint in mid-September. It's incredible how people seem to wake up and the networking mindset moves into full swing. It's all-business, so stay on top of new contacts and use your follow up system as you could easily miss some hot contacts. Lead the Christmas slowdown by focusing on a holiday mindset. You can actually use this perspective to accomplish more relationship-building at this time of year. ■

Known as THE Networking Guru, Michael Hughes has done extensive research on, and is a specialist in, utilizing networking as a business strategy. Visit www.NetworkingForResults.com for more details on his programs and services, and register for his FREE weekly email networking tip. Michael has been an MPI Platinum Speaker Resource since 2002, is a past president of CAPS-Ottawa and is the 2006 chair of the 800-member Ottawa Chamber of Commerce.



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Those Little Words in a Contract

► **Kelly Franklin Bagnall, Partner**
Brown McCarroll, LLP
Offices in Texas
September Speaker



Nowhere are the clichés “the devil is in the details” and “every word counts” more appropriate than in deciphering contracts. The meaning of an entire contract or a critical provision of a contract can depend on one or two little words. In contract negotiations, the ability of a party to understand the impact that the addition or deletion of mere words or phrases can have on a contract enhances that person’s ability to negotiate a contract which truly and accurately reflects the intent of the parties.

In the hospitality industry, one does not have to be a student of the law to understand the implications of many of the “legal” terms and conditions contained in a group event or vendor contract and the effect of proposed modifications

to such contract. While some of the legal concepts can be fairly complex, a general understanding of contract provisions typically included in the industry enables the parties to create an agreement that each can perform and apportion the risks consistent with their understanding. Similarly, the impact of adding the word “not” after the word “shall” or changing the word “shall” to “may” can also have a dramatic impact on contract obligations.

Indemnity clauses in hospitality contracts are frequently negotiated. While indemnity clauses generally create an obligation for one party to pay for another party’s costs or losses under specific circumstances, the clause can also be used to state that a party is serving as an insurer of losses or guarantor of revenues. Without an understanding of the concepts and specific meaning of the indemnity clause, a party may assume more liability or risk than intended, or, alternatively, forego certain rights they expect under the agreement. For example, if the indemnity clause in a contract is triggered only upon a party’s “gross” negligence and, if during negotiations the parties simply delete the word “gross,” then the scope of that indemnity and the corresponding potential financial impact has been dramatically altered. As another example, in a recent contract negotiation, a party submitted a change in the indemnity language so that it applied only to claims arising from third parties. Had that change been permitted, it would have eliminated protection from claims by the other party’s own employees, such as worker’s compensation claims.

Choice of law provisions also can be modified in very minor ways that will create a huge impact on what law will be used

to interpret the contract and in what forum the disputes will be resolved. For example, a recent draft contract provided that it was governed by the laws of the State of New York. To that clause, language had been added that simply said “and venue shall be in Florida.” The language as modified meant that a Florida court would be applying New York law to resolve disputes that arose under that agreement. Neither the hotel nor the group was located in New York or Florida.

In the hospitality industry, one does not have to be a student of the law to understand the implications of many of the “legal” terms and conditions contained in a group event or vendor contract and the effect of proposed modifications to such contract.

Another commonly requested change which could dramatically alter a contract is the removal of the language that certain cancellation or attrition damages are considered by the parties to be “liquidated.” Provisions for

liquidated damages in an agreement require parties to agree in advance that if certain events or circumstances arise where the amount of damages is not easily ascertained, a predetermined amount or calculation will apply. By removing the “liquidated damage” language from a contract, the damaged party would then be required to prove specific actual damages after they have occurred, at a significant increase in time and cost. Further, this would make resolution of the dispute at an early stage much more difficult.

The above cited examples are just a few of the legal issues which arise in contract negotiations in the hospitality industry every day. By understanding some of these concepts and the effect of certain modifications on contracts, the parties entering into an agreement have an enhanced ability to create a contract that accurately reflects the understanding between the parties, but not burden the parties with obligations or unintended results.

Practically speaking, each party should work with good computer “redlining” or text comparison programs each time a draft of a contract is changed in order to draw attention to the proposed changes. It is always important to READ the document, line by line, before it is signed. Those “little words” can make a big difference. ■

Brown McCarroll, L.L.P. has a significant hospitality practice group representing owners, managers and developers in the hospitality industry.

Business Card Etiquette

► Colleen A. Rickenbacher, CMP, CSEP
President/Owner of
Colleen Rickenbacher, Inc.
www.colleenrickenbacher.com
November Education Day Presenter



Sounds funny that I would write an entire article on a piece of paper or card stock that generally measures 3 ½" x 2". But this small card is your calling card and generally your first impression. This card may also be your only lasting connection you have with a perspective client. It is also very amazing how many errors we can make with those small cards. We throw them across a table, we sit on them and we write on them. You probably are saying "not me!" But I bet most of us have made at least one or two business card faux pas. Here are my Top Ten Business Card Suggestions and Tips:

1. **Keep your business card up-to-date.** Never give out a card that you crossed out your phone number or e-mail address and then wrote in your new one. You can always make a temporary business card on your computer. Plan in advance when you know some of your information is changing or a new title or certification needs to be added.
2. **A business card is not a novel.** Only state the necessary information. Have your card look professional and display all the necessary information with your name, logo, company name and contact information. Too much information can be confusing and look crowded on the card.
3. **Take your time when you hand out your cards.** Make sure you present the card with your name facing the person that will receive your card. Don't cover your name or information on the card with your hand or fingers. Let the person receiving the card, look at it and read it. In other countries, the business card exchange is much more formal including standing to present and presenting with both hands.
4. **Avoid sitting on your cards.** Place your cards in a brief case, card holder, or any pocket other than the one on which you will sit. Think about it. Would you want a card that someone has been sitting on all day?
5. **Always be prepared with ample amount of cards for a business trip or tradeshow.** It can't hurt to have too many and unprofessional to run out on the first day of a convention. I've seen this happen many times and shame on you!
6. **During those tradeshows or conventions always keep your cards separated.** Have your own cards

either in your name badge holder or in a business card holder. Place the cards you collect in another area. Avoid shuffling the cards and handing a person a card that is either written on or is not yours.

7. **Avoid tossing them across a table during a meal function.** Either pass them around the table (to your right) or stand up and deliver the card to that person or persons.
8. **Take the time to read the card when it is presented to you.** It would help you remember their name and company. These cards can also serve as further conversational 'chit-chat' about their company or their position within the company.
9. **Try to avoid writing on a person's card.** If you need to make a note for an upcoming meeting or a request to send information, try and have a small note pad or another way to make notes. If you must write on the card, ask the person if you can write on their card and then turn it over and write on the blank side of the card. Never do this when dealing internationally.
10. **Follow-up.** After you meet and exchange cards, if there is any follow-up, then handle it within 24-48 hours if not sooner. Don't delay. Deliver what you promise. ■

Colleen can be seen and heard on national television and radio and the author of Be On Your Best Business Behavior. She will be a presenter during the MPI WI Education Day, November 9, 2006 on Dining & Business Etiquette.

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On The Mooove

► **Lori A. Fuhrmann**
Four Points by Sheraton
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Susan Kainz has just accepted a position with the Marcus Hotels and Resorts at Grand Geneva Resort as Corporate Sales Manager. Her role will be to develop new business with corporate groups in Northern Illinois.

Allie Gershke-Kinney resigned her position as Supplier Director as her new position with Merck Pharmaceuticals required more than she anticipated. She will still maintain her membership with MPI. **Cindy Parker-Ferguson** moved into the position vacated by Allie, and **Tami Gilbertson, CMP** of WPS Insurance has graciously accepted the board position vacated by Cindy. In sum, Cindy is the Planner Director now overseeing the website, public relations and advocacy. Tami is the Planner Director now overseeing the Agenda newsletter, community outreach and advertising.

Sue Lindstrom is back at the Marriott Madison! Congratulations Sue!

John Chastan, CMP has been promoted to the General Manager of the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center.

Jen Yakimicki Guimond has been promoted to Regional Director of Sales with the North Central Group in Madison and leads the Madison Sales Team and handles corporate business. There are currently six Regional Account Managers in the Madison Sales Office, each servicing different market segments. Other members of the newly formed sales team are: **Janet Janoski** - Regional Account Manager for Travel Agents and Corporate business; **Cory Lemiski** - Regional Account Manager for Sports, Motorcoach/Tour groups, Religious and Pharmaceutical business; **Joe Schaefer** - Regional Account Manager for Associations, Reunions, Government and Military business; **Michelle Schultz** - Regional Account Manager for Extended Stay and Corporate business; and, **Emily Van Houten** - Regional Account Manager for Education, Hospital, Retail and Restaurant business.

Learn more about the hotels and the Madison Sales Team by visiting www.ncghotels.com/madisonareahotels.

If you or you know of anyone that has made a move, please send me an e-mail at lfuhrmann@fourpointsmilwaukeeairport.com. ■

You can go online to MPI International's website and take the MPI Skills Assessment, a self-assessment tool that allows you to compare your proficiency level to over 160 competencies and skills to help you identify your skill level and map out the path to the next stage in your career.

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2006 WSAE/MPI-WI Summer Event

The first MPI-WI/WSAE Summer Event was held on June 21, 2006 at the Heidel House Resort and Conference Center in Green Lake Wisconsin. The Heidel House rolled out the red carpet to approximately 150 meeting planners, association executives and suppliers as they enjoyed a great day of networking.

Golf Outing

by Gary Manke, Immediate Past-President, WSAE

Unfortunately for those attendees who selected to play golf at the Tuscumbia Golf Course, they were treated to the common WSAE rain abbreviated outing. Most golfers were only able to finish 9 holes, however everyone who participated thoroughly enjoyed the event.

The foursome which had the lowest score and the winners of the team golf competition were, Amy Qualmann, Suby, VonHaden & Associates; Andi Wilbee, Waukesha Pewaukee CVB; Joe Wimberger, The Eagles Nest; and, Laura Cornell, The Monona Terrace and Convention Center. The team, which had the highest score were, Matt Foley, Tundra Lodge Resort; Steve Lorenz, Wisconsin Medical Society; Jerilyn Kirchner, Tundra Lodge Resort; and, Mae Ibe, Fox Cities CVB. In addition to the team competition several individual winners took home prizes as well. Hole #2 closest to the pin winner, Taj Jordan, Hole #3 closest in 3 shots winner, Joe Wimberger, Hole #7 men's longest drive winner, Brent Eggen, Hole #9 longest putt winner, Bill Bull, Hole #13 closest to the pin winner, Brad Legreid, Hole #14 women's longest drive winner, Janet Sperstad, Hole #16 closest to the pin in 2 winner, Brent Eggen, and Hole #18 longest putt winner, Dan Hoppe.



Brittani Von Ruden, Ann Barrett, CAE and Cindy Foley, CMP anxiously await the raffle drawing at the dinner celebration.

Photo credit: Kim Ball, CMP/Brittani Von Ruden



Marie Johnson, Kim Ball, CMP, Gary Manke, CAE and Daryll Lund, CAE had a premonition it was going to be a wet day on the golf course.

Photo credit: Kim Ball, CMP/Brittani Von Ruden



Gary Manke, CMP just told Mae Ibe that the event was revenue positive!

Photo credit: Kim Ball, CMP/Brittani Von Ruden

Pontoon Scavenger Hunt

by Brittani Von Ruden, Oshkosh CVB, WSAE

Rain and thunderstorms weren't going to dampen the fun for the non-golfers either. They were determined to get on the two pontoons and participate in a friendly competition. Jimmy, our fearless hunt coordinator, started us on our way telling us that the competition was based on creativity, team name, and team cheer—not necessarily the “right” answers. Polaroid cameras and film were given to each group to document the trip. And we were off!

Our team's first task, that seemed to come way too easy was choosing a creative name. Having only two men on our pontoon, the name “Pon-2-Man” seemed to fit us just right, while the second place team in the two teamed competition's name was “Ahead of the Storm,” also fitting the rainy situation quite well. Heading across Big Green, clues were read out loud and we started strategizing with possible answers and team cheers.



Photo credit: Kim Ball, CMP/Brittani Von Ruden

Laura McCurdy, Heidel House Resort; Sarah Bownds, Rotary International; Katie Williams, Chippewa Valley CVB; and Kristi Mirocha, EPIC Creative Communications believe they have outsmarted the other team.

Pon-2-Man's first quest was fulfilled with two pictures and a conversation with three local boys who gave us some insight about our remaining clues. I don't know what was more hilarious about that stop — hanging Michael Kirby by his ankles off a deck for a picture or Kristi Mirocha paying those three boys, to not give any clues to the other team! Both Michael's sacrifice and Kristi's competitive edge deservedly won them MVPs, A.K.A. “Most Valuable PONTOONERS” for team Pon-2-Man.

Meanwhile, in Ahead of the Storm's boat, Diane Meyer secured answers by calling her friend's mother who works at the Green Lake Chamber of Commerce — yes, cell phones do work on Big Green! This and her leadership with their Gilligan's Island tuned team cheer won her MVP, by her team, along with John Dorgan, who seemed to take the reigns by being the organizer and creative mind of their group.

As we were eating our boxed lunches and thinking about our next stop, we got a phone call — we had to head back because a huge storm was coming. Being the competitors that we were, team Pon-2-Man took advantage of everything that we could see on the way

back, and persuaded our pilot to take her time, even turn around once or twice to get the perfect pose for our pictures.

Upon arrival back at the Heidel House, Jimmy informed us that we would continue the scavenger hunt with improvised answers from within the buildings. This challenged our creativity, but was a fun adventure ... stopping in the two-stall woman's bathroom for a tornado drill picture with our heads between our legs, posing with our “high-knockers” and creating our poster with whiteout, toilet paper and our Polaroid's. Ahead of the storm took advantage of the one man on their team and “shunned” him to create the answer of Grey Rock “man-SHUN” ... maybe you had to be there to get it!

We all got on the pontoons as strangers with business cards in our hands and by the end of the trip we left the boats as friends. Thanks MPI/WSAE Summer Event Coordinators for giving the non-golfers a day they will never forget!

We would once again like to say “thank you” to all of our sponsors (listed on page 4) for their generous contributions to the WSAE/MPI-WI Summer Event as well as all the companies that donated prizes for our raffle. ■

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Wyndham Milwaukee Center

What's New?

No doubt ... the most often asked question in the Promotional Products Market. Easy to ask, but have you ever thought about it? After 23 years of being asked the same question, I have pondered it often.

Is a product new, if you buy a newer model or version? We say we bought a new car, but it is very possible the model is the same as we had before. It just has fewer miles and is more shiny.

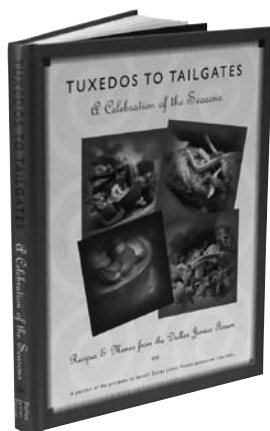
Is a product new if it is made out of brighter colors? At a recent ASI Trade Show, I noticed a lot of items that vendors said were new, like luggage tags in brilliant bright colors. But luggage tags are older than I am (I think). Is a tote bag new if it has an extra zipper and an outside pocket? I guess one could say yes, because it looks different and has more functionality. But is it really the “new” you are looking for?

The point is, we all mean something different when we ask “What’s NEW?” What’s new to you, or your client, might not be new to me. For example, I was recently asked if I could find an imprinted USB Drive that I was told was new. Yet, it’s been available for months as an ad specialty item.

Dining Dough – Receive \$25 worth of food at over 6500 restaurants, at a cost to you of less than 35% of the face value. Or use it for gifts from partners like Mrs. Fields, wine.com, KaBloom flowers, and more. Makes a great mailer as an invitation to your event, a thank you gift to speakers, online surveys, employee recognition for a job well done and many other occasions.



Books – If you attended MPI-WEC in Dallas, you received a hardcover Cookbook as a room gift. Boy, was my wife happy to get that! Why are books great? They are never thrown away, they are appreciated because everyone reads, they make great souvenirs that remind you of your trip and the choices are unlimited. Select a Cookbook from the area of your meeting or event, mail a Tour Guide of local attractions to entice recipients to attend your event, pass out Business Books that relate to your seminar topic, Exercise Guides for travelers, Wine Guides, Golf Tips, Dr. Seuss for the kids.....virtually any book that will make your event special and memorable.



► **Dave Elbing**
Vice President of
Business Development
MARCO

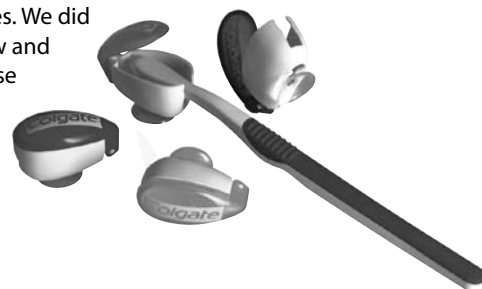


Are you interested in what’s new or are you more interested in what items are available that perhaps haven’t been used before – by your audience, for your particular event – that will help you accomplish your goal? I strongly believe it is the latter and can be achieved by working closely with a supplier that:

1. Has experience in promotional products, trinkets & trash, ad specialties and chotskys.
2. Has the ability to source items that fit your specific needs.
3. Is anxious to partner with you to find just the right item.
4. Keeps abreast of new trends and designs.
5. Works with reliable manufacturers.

Sometimes you want an innovative, never-seen before item. In other instances, you can use existing products and give them a new twist or use them in a new way. Hopefully, this sampling of promotional items gives you some ideas on how you can make your event more successful. ■

Antibacterial Toothbrush Holder – Small, unimpressive, inexpensive, but extremely useful. Keeps your toothbrush sanitized in your toiletry kit. It only covers the brush, so it fits virtually every toothbrush. FDA approved, the antibacterial agent molded into the capsule lasts for 2-3 years. Ideal for travel. The suction cup sticks to mirrors and tile, keeping your brush handy. And, your custom imprint is always facing the customer. It makes a great pre-show mailer to trade show attendees. We did it for the Dallas Show and had the best response of any previous mailing. All visitors to our booth said they had theirs hanging on the mirror in their hotel room.



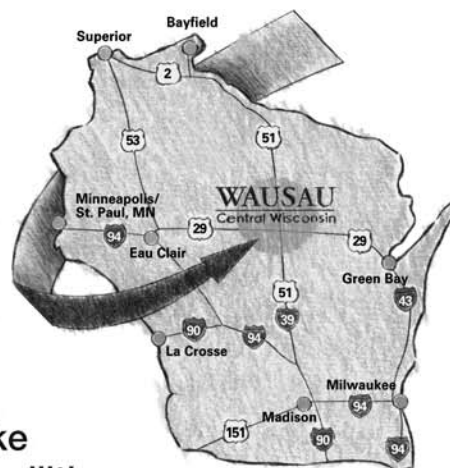
Crouching Tiger Pen – A compact, fold out pen that is perfect for pocket or purse. The ink cartridge does not extend until the pen is completely folded out.....hurray, no more ink stained shirts, pants, blouses, or dresses! Also available with a rope lanyard that keeps a pen handy at all times and is easily detachable when you need it. Perfect for trade shows, offices, manufacturing facilities, restaurants, etc. Comes in four fashionable translucent colors to relate to your corporate colors.



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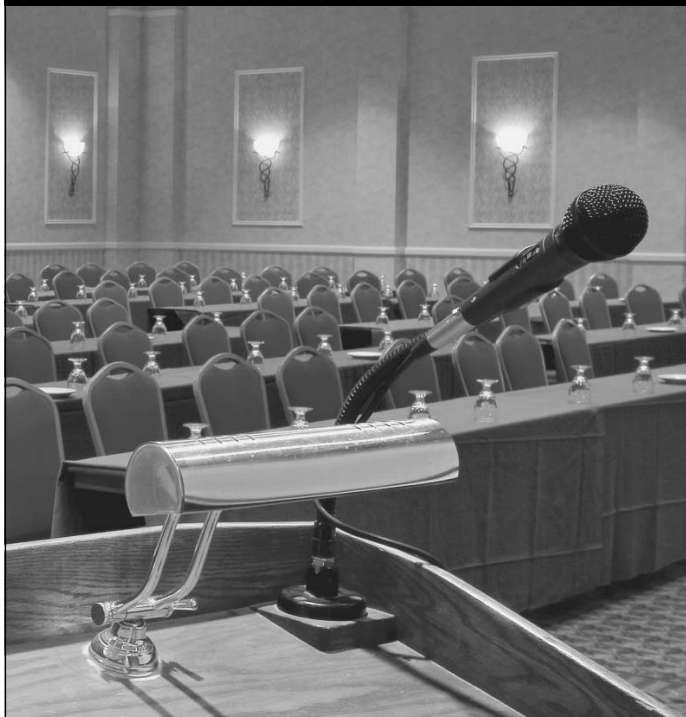
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Future Leaders Forum

► **Alison Barta**
Student
Oxford, WI



What a wonderful WEC! Alongside the wonderful education and networking opportunities for all, I was lucky enough to be part of the 2nd IMEX-MPI Future Leaders Forum, this time as a facilitator.

This fabulous event sponsored 30 students from across North America to attend WEC and offered special sessions just for the students. The students were chosen through an application process. I am proud to say that 4 of the 29 students who attended were from our very own Madison Area Technical College. Congratulations!

The Forum began Saturday with a quick icebreaker activity, followed by a session on MPI Professional Pathways and completing your skills assessment. The students were full of questions and great ideas to share with everyone. The final session that afternoon provided the students tips for making the most of their time at the WEC.

Saturday evening they were treated to a short reception, including a welcome by MPI Chairman Mark Andrew and IMEX representatives Tom Hulton and Dale Hudson. They were also greeted by past forum participants from both last year's North American Forum and the European forum. A little time for networking, then they were off to join the other Congress attendees at the Iron Cactus.

Up early on Sunday for a wonderful session on MPI's CultureActive© Tool, which was rolled out to all members at this year's WEC. This session was followed by etiquette tips from Colleen Rickenbacher, who will be joining us for our Fall Education day in Madison this coming November. A short wrap-up and the students joined their chapters for the opening general session.

One final gathering of the students on Monday morning was the highlight of the forum. MPI's Student/Faculty Committee chair, Joan Eisenstodt, put together an extraordinary line up of industry professionals for Mega-Mentoring roundtables. Professionals from all parts of the industry introduced themselves to the entire group, then had time for two rounds of discussion in small groups. The students were completely engaged and had the chance to talk to those in the career they are interested in.

The students enjoyed this wonderful opportunity to be a part of WEC and to network with other student's from across North American. Congratulations again to our Wisconsin representatives – Julie Jacobs, Allison McCarty, Meredith Rockafellow, and Jamie Stoiber. ■

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► **Sharon Korbeck Verbeten**, *All Write Creative*

Kelly Langenecker used to complain about having to run a mile in high school. But upon hearing she had completed a marathon in Dublin, Ireland, in 2002, her high school track coach voiced his surprise. “I still hear you whining from the time I made you run the mile relay,” he teased.

Running has been a part of Langenecker’s life since junior high in Lomira, Wisconsin. But in the past six years, the 31-year-old has taken running to the extreme by participating in marathons and triathlons around the globe.

Langenecker, who lives in Milwaukee and works as National Convention and Sports Marketing Manager for VISIT Milwaukee, says she’s always been adventure prone. “I grew up with three brothers, so it was always ‘I dare you,’” she said.

For Langenecker, running these mega feats is more than just a means of keeping in shape. “I have pursued marathons, triathlons and century bike rides to see new places, meet new people, challenge myself physically and mentally — oh, and so I can eat whatever I want!” she said.

Running for a cause

But she also has a more altruistic reason to globetrot. When she ran her first marathon, in Chicago, in 2000, she noticed runners wearing jerseys in support of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). Impressed by their goals, Langenecker raised \$4,200 and sported her own Society jersey at a half marathon in Anchorage, Alaska, the following year.

“I was hooked,” she said. She was so dedicated that she and her St. Norbert roommate Heidi Etzel both planned to train for the 2002 marathon in Dublin.

But in an unfortunate twist of irony, Etzel soon was diagnosed with Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML), an aggressive cancer. While unable to compete, Langenecker continued her pursuit. “I got involved because it was a good cause, and then

it became personal,” she said. “It became for her, instead of with her.” She raised \$5,000 and wore Etzel’s name on her jersey.

Sadly, Etzel lost her battle to AML in 2003, and classmate Chris Ayers has since been diagnosed with leukemia, but their battles have only strengthened Langenecker’s resolve. Now one of the board of directors of the LLS, she has raised more than \$20,000 for research through benefit runs; including three Wisconsin triathlons each year.

Adventure and running

Amid her training and work on behalf of LLS, Langenecker always makes sure to get in a dose of adventure for herself. While in Alaska for the marathon, she sea-planed through the mountains and glaciers of Anchorage. “That was just amazing. The water was just the most amazing turquoise blue,” she said. And just last year, she paraglided from more than 6,000 feet atop the Swiss Alps.

But while these quests were breathtaking, perhaps the most personally gratifying for Langenecker are those that help others. In 2007, she plans to bike 100 miles in the Lake Tahoe century ride, an LLS benefit in which she hopes to raise more than \$4,000.

There’s definitely no slowing her down—“If given the option between lying on a beach or parasailing, I’ll always take the parasailing. Not to say I can’t sit still, but I’m more of a ‘doer,’ always moving and trying new things,” she said.

Sharon Korbeck Verbeten is a freelance writer from De Pere, Wisconsin. Sharon Korbeck Verbeten, All Write Creative Services, 820 Spooner Ct., De Pere, WI 54115, 920-339-2740

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Sharon Korbeck Verbeten sea kayaking

Supplier Profile: Sharon Erler

► Sharon Erler

Business Development Director
Mcloone
LaCrosse, WI



How long in the meetings industry?

Joining MPI this spring was my first official affiliation with the meeting industry. I have a true passion for event planning and I am envious of all of you who are fortunate enough to do it for a living!

How long in MPI?

I joined MPI this spring along with two of my colleagues (Kari Hendrickson and Troy Kubitz).

Tell a bit about your company and/or current position:

Mcloone is a 51-year old screenprinting company located in La Crosse. Our traditional product line includes custom product identification such as nameplates, labels and point-of-purchase signage. We recently expanded our product offering to include metal and polycarbonate business cards and invitations. We are extremely excited about these new products as they're very unique and definitely make an impression.

My current position at Mcloone is in Business Development. I oversee sales, marketing, and customer service.

Where were you born?

La Crosse

Where do you currently live?

La Crosse

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

I have not been involved with any MPI teams or projects as of yet. I look forward to exploring these opportunities.

Favorite Musical Group:

Now, that's a hard question as I have a wide range of favorite musical groups, including Petula Clark (no, that's not a typo, I love Petula!), Rolling Stones, John Mellencamp, Abba, Susan Tedeschi, and of course Hootie & the Blowfish.

Family:

I am married and have 2 grown children. My son lives in Eugene, Oregon where he is a land surveyor. My daughter lives in La Crosse and recently graduated from UWL with a business degree.

Person you admire most and why:

I definitely admire my mother the most. She is the most intelligent, caring, kind, giving, fun and understanding person I have ever met. After raising 10 kids while working full-time as a pharmacist, she is still incredibly sane!

Dream Vacation:

I was actually fortunate enough to experience my dream vacation last fall. I surprised my husband with a trip to St. Johns for his 50th birthday. On the morning

of his birthday, I woke him up and whisked him off to the airport. He had no idea where we were going and ended the day with a birthday dinner at St. Johns. Our vacation included a sailing excursion on the Caribbean Sea, snorkeling in the famous British Virgin Island Baths, and just plain relaxing. It was the best vacation ever!

If I won the lottery I

would: No doubt about it, I would pack my bags and move to St. Johns and live happily ever after! I might even dabble in event planning on the island!

Words to live by:

Everything happens for a reason!

Special personal accomplishments:

My proudest personal accomplishments have to be my two children. I am very proud of both of them as they both turned out to be extremely wonderful young adults.

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

I am very excited to be a member of MPI and look forward to making long-lasting friendships! ■

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SEPTEMBER

13 PCMA Greater Midwest Chapter

September Educ. Mtg.
Managing Your Boss
Marriott, Chicago, IL

14 MPI-WI Meeting

Leveraging Legal Knowledge
During Contract Negotiations
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
Wausau, WI
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OCTOBER

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12 MPI-WI Meeting

Networking for Results:
The Art & Science of
Leveraging Relationships for
More Sales & Profits
Fox Hills Resort
Mishicot, WI
www.mpiwi.org

NOVEMBER

9 MPI-WI Fall Education

Hot Technologies in the Meeting Industry — Platinum Series Program
James Spellos, Keynote
Alliant Energy Center, Madison
www.mpiwi.org

DECEMBER

5 MPI-WI Chapter Holiday Party

WSAE Monthly Meeting
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