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MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

JAN/FEB 2011
VOL 33 NUM 1

Agenda

* MPI October Education Day p 16



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Learning is fundamentally about making and maintaining connections among concepts and ideas, and experientially through interaction with others. It allows and encourages partnerships to address gaps in services and/or continuation of services. While education may be the catalyst, quality partnerships are fundamental to the development of our economy, quality of our lives, and health of our democracy.

People and companies collaborate when the job they face is too big, is too urgent, or requires too much knowledge for one person or group to do alone. Marshalling what we know and applying it to the situation at hand takes partnership through education and communication. These partnerships are strongly affected by the climate in which they take place; the settings and surroundings, and the influence of others.

This association has recognized the need to develop our partnerships and share the responsibility for collaborative learning to make significant progress. We offer networking and education events to inspire communication, connection and partnerships.

Yet, there is another reason to work collaboratively.

Partnering and learning are social activities. Partnering is done by individuals who are intrinsically tied to others as social beings. Interacting as competitors or collaborators, building on and supporting the process, we are able to enhance partnership through cooperation, sharing, and education. As members of MPI-WI we are dedicated to partnering with each other and learning from each other. We have a responsibility to work together on behalf of our shared mission and to partner in our own cumulative process along with the education of others in and outside our own industry.



In our world as it exists today, the path to successful partnerships has been made easier through email, instant messaging and virtual technology. However, nothing beats the face to face meeting in building key connections. I think we all look forward to and love to socialize at the MPI gatherings as we build partnerships for the future; developing bonds through shared experiences, interests and education.

I hope to see you and begin developing a new partnership at the next meeting! 🌐

Cindy

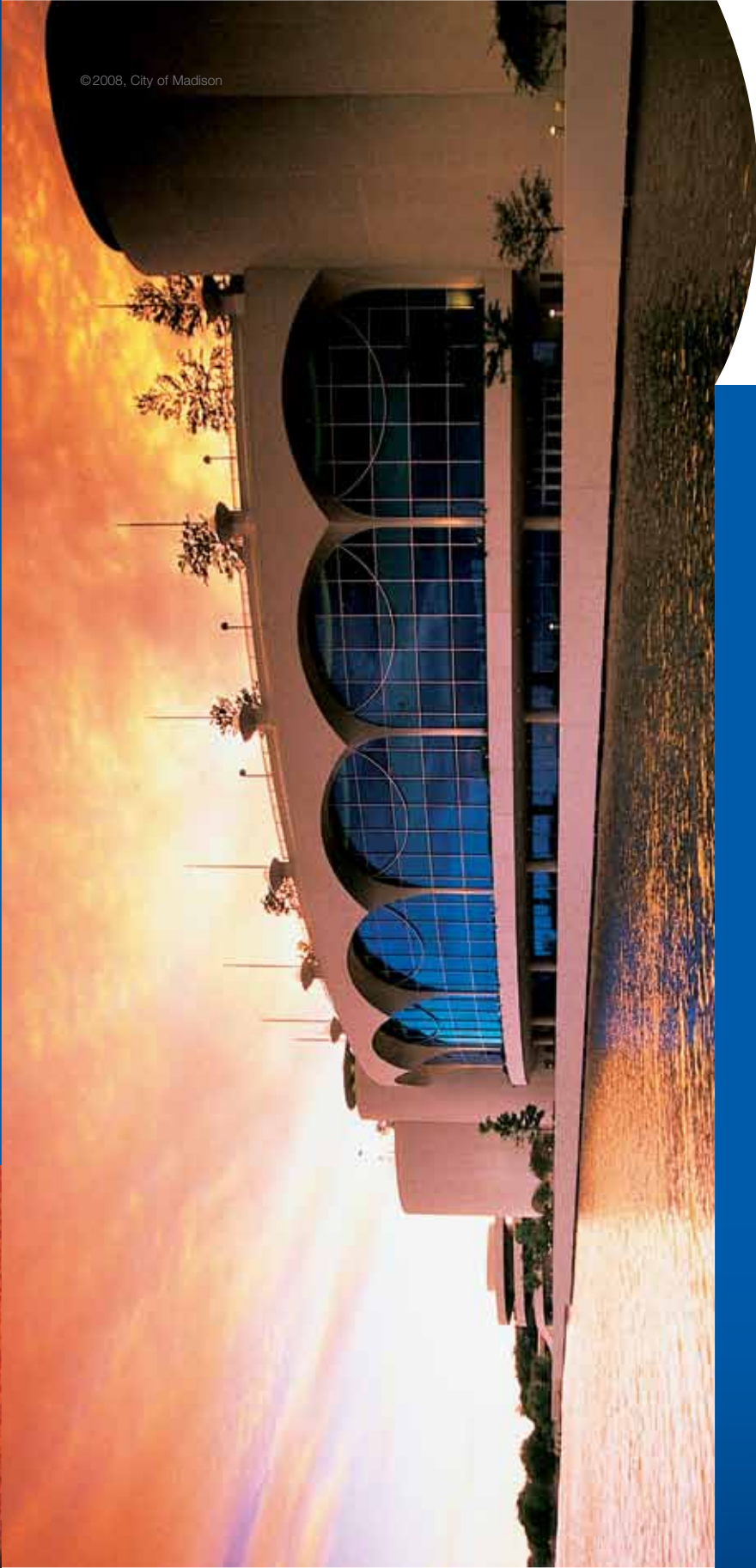


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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Our theme this year is *Partnering in Each Other's Success*. Our mission simple – bring industry professionals together to learn best practices, build relationships and enhance business opportunities.

Throughout the year, so many of our suppliers support the efforts and goals of our chapter. They promote their products and services in our print and electronic publications; host our monthly educational programs; sponsor at special events; exhibit at tradeshow, provide products, deliver services, donate items for our raffles, give to our silent auctions; and volunteer their time. For all of the above and anything not mentioned, we are very thankful!

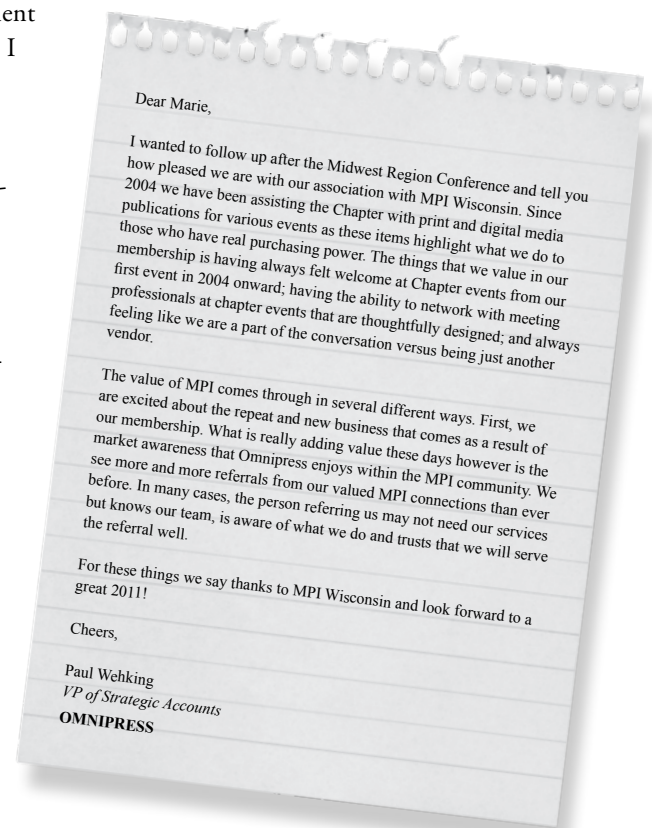
So, fittingly, this issue of the *AGENDA* is a special feature dedicated to ALL of our valued supplier members and the companies that support their involvement with Meeting Professionals International. Through their membership, they demonstrate their commitment to our industry and profession. Through their participation, they develop relationships to better understand our business challenges and changing needs.

I was reminded of this recently by Rolfe Nervig, a relatively new member to MPI-WI. He shared “it is clear this is the professional group that Studio Gear needs to be a part of in order to build strong business relationships and keep in touch with new developments in the world of meetings and conferences.” I was particularly struck by the second part of his statement that he recognizes it is important to stay connected to keep in touch with new developments important to us. This speaks loudly to the investment that our supplier partners make not only to their success, but to ours. And, I must thank Tom Graybill, Tri-Marq Communications, for bringing Studio Gear onboard.

The Wisconsin Dells VCB, Industry Partner 2008, appreciates the opportunities to support the MPI-WI Chapter through advertising, exhibiting and sponsoring various events. Alison Huber, CMP said “MPI does a wonderful job of making the suppliers feel welcome as members at each and every event. The networking opportunities have been priceless throughout the years. We have found great return on our membership investment by meeting new clients as well as continuing the valuable relationships with our existing contacts.”

A few years back, Meeting Professionals International launched a catchy marketing campaign – Buy MPI. This seemingly simple rhyme “Buy MPI” conveys a strong message that our network of 23,000 global professionals is a great place to start when you need the products, services or expertise of our industry partners. According to MarketSmart Solutions, 73% of our members choose to buy MPI to harness our \$16.9 billion planner buying power.

As a statewide organization, we cover a lot of geography and expose our members to some wonderful properties and venues – from the shores of Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River all the way to the borders of Canada. Our December Holiday Event was hosted at the Glacier Canyon Conference Center in the Wisconsin Dells. Shannon Timmerman, CMP, stated “it is always an honor to be selected as a host property for an MPI-WI Chapter event. In one evening I was able to showcase our banquet and meeting space, food from our different onsite restaurants, spa services, hospitality room options and photo booth opportunities that we have avail-



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COMMUNICATE. MOTIVATE. COLLABORATE. ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL MIDWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Not surprisingly, the MPI Wisconsin and Minnesota Chapters completed another successful collaboration for the Midwest Regional Conference. Amazing event venues, extraordinary speakers and unmatched networking opportunities headline the stories attendees continue to tell following the second annual event.

As meeting professionals, we all know the amount of effort it takes to pull off a successful conference. Now add in that all team members are volunteers, with full-time jobs, families and other volunteer commitments and you come to realize just how special it really was to be a part of the Midwest Regional Conference.

For those who took advantage of either the charter bus or carpooling with another member, the casual networking that took place was an excellent way to kick-off the trip to St. Paul. From food and beverages, to interactive games (Harry Potter!!!) or just some quiet time with a good book or your favorite music, the bus afforded many the opportunity to attend that they may not have had without the option. Add in a great show of support for the MPI Foundation, the MPI-Wisconsin Chapter raised \$93 from a 50-50 raffle. What a generous group we are!

A bit of a rainy evening welcomed attendees to the James J Hill Library. Stacks of books, three stories high, lined the magnificent main hall, along with quiet music, fondue and a few cocktails. Another highlight of the evening was the impromptu fundraising event for the MPI Foundation, with the over 150 attendees raising nearly \$400 just for a chance at a fabulous two-night stay at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

The student members were very visible and enjoyed some important networking of their own at the reception as well. You could not miss their excitement as they met other students, nor could you miss the balloon bouquet to mark their table!

Bright and early Thursday morning, we made our way to the Saint Paul RiverCentre for the official start of the Midwest Regional Conference. The hallways were alive with conference team members filling attendee bags, chapter administrators welcoming



attendees, and exhibitors setting up for the Supplier Showcase.

Following a warm welcome by MPI-MN President Donna Patrick, CMP, CMM, a lively presentation by Bryan Dodge was the perfect start to a perfect day. In Bryan's presentation, *How to Build a Better You*, he helped attendees focus on the important things in life – your potential with your family and your

career. His inspirational message kept you completely engaged with feelings of joy, sounds of laughter, the occasional random thought and reminders of what matters most in life.

The next stop on the agenda included four fantastic breakout sessions. Suppliers packed the room for Bryan Dodge's session on successful negotiation and communication skills. For the leader in all of us, professional speaker Rob Bell led attendees through tips for being a positive, successful leader. Seth Mattison's session on collaborating across the generations for successful events was a big hit, no matter which generation you call your own. And on the logistical side, the MPI-Wisconsin Chapter's very own Tom Graybill and Michelle Johnson were stars in their own session – *Enhancing Meetings with Media*.

Following those invigorating sessions, it was back to the general session room for an industry update, *Thinking Outside the Room*, with MPI's President and CEO, Bruce MacMillan, CA. Bruce took the group on a journey through the up-and-coming trends in our industry, showcasing interactive events

I would like to thank my fellow team members for their hard work and dedication.

Wisconsin Team

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Sherry Benzmilller, CMP
Tamara Putney, CMP
Taci Tolzman
President Marie Johnson, CMP

Minnesota Team

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Erin Feeney
Lisa-Marie James
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President Donna Patrick, CMP, CMM

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BUILDING BLOCKS

(Managing your Supplier-Planner Relationship)

By Naomi Tucker, CMP, MPI-WI VP Communications



If you follow some meeting industry groups on LinkedIn, there has been much “buzz” on supplier and planner relationships. LinkedIn is continuing to prove that professionals can get together and provide instant feedback to questions that concern our industry. Many organizations are putting constant pressure on sales to create more profits. However, the idea of sales is as a concept that has changed from what it was even five years ago. The focus is now in the relationship, and not the “sell.” Most of the great sales professionals have lived by this rule of thumb. However, there are still sales professionals that are foreign to this concept. It can be difficult to have sight

of the strategic focus, yet strive to meet quotas and deadlines. However research is continuing to show that relationships drive sales. A few years ago, in 2006, Seth Godin* (known as “America’s Greatest Marketer”) wrote in his blog an article about the Death of a Sales Call. In summary, his article predicted that in streamlined organizations, time is of the essence. It is highly unusual for people to have the time to politely listen to a sales call, and if they do, it is simply because they do not want to offend the business-to-business salesperson. So, what does a sales person do?

Specific to our business, many comments have been made on a LinkedIn conversation in the Meeting Professional International Group about sales calls. In addition, MPI Wisconsin Chapter’s Group also had a couple of questions that covered the topics of supplier-planner relationships. The conversations took many twists and turns yet, here are several takeaways that I feel can benefit both supplier and planner:

Doing Homework Helps

Everyone agrees that cold calls are essential to developing a relationship with the customer. However, researching your customer’s company prior to calling them will help in your efforts to establish a strong foundation for your relationship. Quick

website searches, and perhaps using some social media sites, can help you find out some information that you need regarding your customer and his or her company. Some online conversations showed that meeting planners are still getting contacted by sales people that do not know the company’s business! Try to do your homework, and use your findings (especially recent public news) to establish a conversation starter with your customer.

Just Listen

Once the conversation is started, it is in both parties best interest to listen and understand the goals of each other. Planners do have to be understanding of what new hotels, planning tools, mergers, and businesses are out there that will help them put a fresh look on their meetings. Likewise, suppliers need to be able to rise above the need for the “sell” and understand the needs of the organization through effective listening and questioning. If time is not available with the person you are calling, schedule another time to talk. Planners are very busy, and at times do not have too much time to run through a presentation on a cold call. Relationship building takes a while, and eventually if the relationship is strong then the sales will eventually come. Be yourself.

Both Supplier and Planner Play a Part

The relationship between the supplier and planner is maintained by both the supplier and planner. The supplier is there to make sure that they are meeting their planner partner’s need, and if not, understand why that need cannot be met. The planner is there to make sure the supplier meets their needs, and be prepared to honestly (but nicely) tell the supplier why that need cannot be met with that organization. It has also been noted that planners are also an extension of a supplier’s sales team. Word of mouth is a great way to “pay it forward” especially when a supplier is not able to meet immediate needs, but may be a good fit for other colleagues or peers.

Hopefully some of my takeaways will help you in building blocks with your supplier and planner partners. 🌐

Reference: Seth Godin’s Blog. <http://sethgodin.typepad.com/>.



Naomi Tucker, CMP, is a project manager for Humana Inc. and is the Vice President of Education for the MPI-WI Chapter.

PAY IT FORWARD

By Susan Kainz

Everyone remembers the movie *"Pay It Forward"* that came out in 2000 (based on the novel by Catherine Ryan Hyde)? Haley Joel Osment stars as a boy who launches a good-will movement, Helen Hunt as his single mother, and Kevin Spacey as his social-studies teacher, Reuben St. Clair.



In case you've forgotten, *"Pay It Forward,"* starts as St. Clair gives his class a voluntary, extra-credit assignment: THINK OF AN IDEA FOR WORLD CHANGE, AND PUT IT INTO ACTION. Of course, like we all do when the boss gives us more work, the class groans. "It's a bummer" and "it's hard" everyone replies. We'd probably add, "Who has the time?"

Well, Trevor, the 12-year-old hero of *"Pay It Forward,"* thinks of an amazing idea. He describes it like this: "I will do something real good for three people. And then when they ask how they can pay it back, I say they have to Pay It Forward to three more people each - so nine people get helped." Then those nine people will pay it forward to twenty-seven more and it keeps going forward.

Okay, take out your calculators, punched in a few numbers. Think of the impact you would have if you passed this along to your family - to your co-workers - or within MPI Wisconsin Chapter? When was the last time you helped someone that didn't ask for your help? In MPI - WI Chapter there are 365 members and if each one passes it forward to three more people See how big it gets? Bottom line ... dream it is possible!

There is a new understanding of Group Forming Networks exploding on the Internet which allows this kind of thinking to proliferate. For example, www.Linkedin.com now allows us to connect networks of networks. If we add the "Pay it Forward" dynamic to the mix, we could find ourselves with the "activation energy" to trigger a cascade of a very uplifting motion. Job openings are launched around the internet at lightning speed. Groups of individuals helping each other on every subject know to man. LinkedIn groups include several different networks of meeting planners and hoteliers all sharing best practices. Recently, I read *"Five Tips On How To Save Money On Food & Beverage Minimums"* as part of the "Hotel

Contracting & Negotiations" Group and the discussion between group members participating was as insightful as the article itself.

Last year, ninety-one members committed to "pay it forward" within MPI - WI by volunteering on various chapter committees. The chapter is always looking for more people to raise their hand and volunteer so if you've got even a little time, join a committee. The rewards

are ten-fold and it is another chance to "pay it forward."

Some chapter members are past volunteers, but with two-thirds of chapter members belonging less than three years, the positive influence you can have tremendous. Dream of the possibilities.

There are many ways to "pay it forward" within MPI - here are a few ideas to start you thinking:

- Give time to help someone study for their CMP exam
- Donate time or money to one of the charities featured at MPI events
- Pass a job opening on to student member or member on a job search
- Submit article for *AGENDA* newsletter
- Pass a potential business opportunity to another MPI member
- Introduce a new chapter member to three other chapter members
- Talk about the value of MPI with non-members, including your boss
- Recommend a speaker to the chapter Speaker Advisory committee

Hopefully, you will inspired to do one little deed today to help someone - a loved one, a neighbor, a co-worker, MPI member/friend, or a complete stranger. Try to make a habit out of it - just one tiny gesture each day. If everyone did this, imagine the effect on the entire world. 🌐



Susan Kainz is VP Member Care & Director of Leadership Development for the MPI-WI Chapter and is a Global Account Executive with ConferenceDirect.

THE SWIZZLE STICK STRATEGY

5 Ways to Stir Up New Business

By Laurie Guest, CSP

Quite by accident I recently noticed a small magazine article outlining the history of the swizzle stick. Until that point I had never given the beverage tool much thought. But on this summer afternoon in the hammock, the kitschy blurb really piqued my interest.

In 1933 Jay Sindler was sitting at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Boston. It was two months after prohibition ended, and he was enjoying a martini. While looking at the sunken olive at the bottom on his glass, he realized that there had to be a better way to retrieve the garnish than using his fingers. He envisioned a small stick with a point on the end that he could use to spear the olive. Before he left the bar, he had sketched a plan on a napkin. Today his company is known as Spir-it Inc., one of the largest manufacturers of swizzle sticks, straws and other foodservice products.

With a little more research, I learned more about swizzle stick concepts and found five major points worth telling. Each point created a bridge to a business-building idea that will help you stir up new business.

What does your customer need that you currently don't offer?

Mr. Sindler needed a way to get the olive out of his martini glass. What does your customer need that you currently don't offer? As a professional speaker, I spent the first ten years of my career focused on selling my training, speaking and coaching packages. As a way to build strong relationships with my clients, I would often share a wide variety of ideas to create theme meetings, interactive games for attendees or sales and marketing tips to get higher registration. One day a meeting planner said to me, "I think your creative ideas have been as valuable to me as your presentation!" Ding! My clients need ideas. Could I position this as part of a premium package and charge for it? Sure enough, in the last five years my annual income has risen about 20% just by formally offering for a fee something I was already doing for free.

Do your customers ask for something you don't offer? Or, is it possible you already have the product or service available and they just don't know about it? What assumption does the public have about your business that is incorrect?

During the 1890s, champagne-sipping socialites mistakenly believed fizziness is what caused drunkenness, and it was very unladylike to be found in a tipsy state. They believed that by using a small stick with a ball on the end, they could pop the carbonated bubbles and avoid inebriation. That was an incor-

rect assumption and one that must have led to a few interesting evenings with the gals.

What assumption might we have about your business?

Many of my financial planning clients answer this assumption question the same way. "People assume that they must have a lot of money to need a financial planner." That is not true. In fact, the best time to get a handle on your dollars is when you are first starting out. Sure, it may take some time until you can invest large amounts like the wealthy, but it is an incorrect assumption to think that only the rich can benefit from meeting with an advisor. Financial planners must work to educate the public on this message.

Once you know what the assumption about your field is, reframing your clients' or customers' thoughts can sometimes be challenging. Spend some time asking people you trust what some erroneous assumptions might be. I recently did this exercise with a group of business leaders using a volunteer from the group as an example. She was very surprised at the long list of incorrect assumptions the public had about her company. She is now actively working to correct that thinking, which in turn will lead to more traffic in her store.

What is the best form of advertising for your company?

Original swizzle sticks were made from wood with a spear on the end. After WWII, colored plastic sticks became the cheapest form of advertising. It was very common for airlines, hotels and bars to serve unusual sticks with their theme and logo proudly displayed. I certainly am not suggesting that a swizzle stick is the answer to your marketing needs, but I am asking you to give careful consideration to the most cost-effective marketing tool available to your company – your staff!

Have you taught your staff to "billboard" correctly? Billboarding is the art of saying a short, benefit-driven statement that catches the attention of the listener. Are you using this technique yourself? We all have many opportunities to use this technique: Outgoing voicemail messages, margins on correspondence, spotlight moments at networking events or, most importantly, in conversations with customers.

Let's look at some examples:

Outgoing voicemail messages often sound like this:

"Hi, this is Mike, I'm out of the office right now but if you will leave your name and number, I will call you back as soon as I return."

We all know what to do at the beep, so there is no need wasting the moments on instruction. Use it for subtle selling. I emphasize subtle. If the caller must sit through a lengthy commercial to leave a message, that's a problem. But a short message like this is effective:

"Hi, you've reached Mike Jones, I'm out helping a client learn how to maximize his website traffic and I can do the same for you. I return all calls within two hours so please leave your number."

Making good use of the blank space in the margin on correspondence is another great idea. The far left margin, which is generally left blank, is a place to post billboard style announcements.

"Ask about our special pricing for April!"

Spotlight moments at networking events. When asked to stand and introduce yourself, do you say something like this?

"My name is Joan Brown and I am from the ABC cleaning company here in town. We offer janitorial services to home owners and small businesses."

By the time 40 people have presented this style of intro, white noise has taken over the brains of the listeners. Try using this next time to pique the interest of others:

"Hi, I'm Joan from ABC Janitorial Service and I can make your cleaning hassles disappear overnight."

The key to billboarding is in using concise, clear and crafted words to grab the attention of the listener.

What form of "collecting" can apply to your business? Americans like to be "in the club."

Imagine my surprise when a Google search landed me at the I.S.S.C.A. (International Swizzle Stick Collectors Association). That's right; there is a club for every kind of person in the world. This group was founded in 1985 by a Canadian named Ray Hoare. Ray was delighted to fill in the details of his swizzle stick collecting saga. When he was a young boy, his parents would go bar hopping and bring home an eclectic assortment of sticks for him to keep. He fell in love with the colors and shapes and soon had an extensive collection. As an adult it occurred to him there may be others just like him who love collecting swizzle sticks, so he started the association. Sure enough, today the group boasts a large membership who meet every other year in Las Vegas – where else? For the whopping fee of \$30 I became a member and within two weeks a large box of sticks arrived in the mail to start my collection off right. How much fun is that?

You might ask what all of this has to do with your business. I believe that many people love to be part of a group. Whether that is through a frequent buyer punch card, discount codes, a member access portal on websites or any other crazy idea you might invent – buyers love to get something for their loyalty.

In late November last year I bought a digital camera at Best Buy. The label clearly states that if the box of a returned item has been opened, there is a 15% restocking fee. Ouch! I didn't care for the camera for a variety of reasons and after much consideration, I decided to return it and eat the 15%. When I presented my Best Buy card, the clerk told me that I was a "Silver Reward Member" and that the restocking fee was waived for me. I was so happy! I didn't even know I was a silver member. I guess I earned that designation from one too many purchases. However, it certainly increased my loyalty to Best Buy. When it was time to shop for Christmas gifts a few weeks later, I had a choice of several places to fill my fourteen-year-old's wish list. The cash went to Best Buy – after all, I'm a silver member.

Get creative on how you can provide value, special offers and incentives. The examples I have from other companies could fill pages. However, I find the most memorable are the ones that are a little different, have a call to action and a deadline. Do not forget to put an expiration date on all offers. The new idea I plan to try is to give each attendee at my session a swizzle stick to take home. On it will be a "vault code." On my website visitors can enter the code to access resources, success stories from others and a host of other items that will stir up new ideas for their businesses. The cost to me will be low; the value to the customer will be high.

SWIZZLE, SIZZLE & POP!

Three more concepts can stir up your business.

Swizzle

The word swizzle was originally the name of a frothy fruit drink. When the inventor coined the phrase swizzle stick, the alliteration of the word made it memorable. What you name things can really make a difference in how they sell. Here is an example:

Spas and salons often make a mistake in naming their services. It does not sound appealing to pay \$95 to be wrapped in mud, packed in seaweed or have a deep tissue rub! While making a presentation to an audience of massage business owners I challenged them to group the individual services together differently and come up with a more attractive name for the treatments. One attendee caught on to the assignment quickly, deciding that since her therapy room

Continued on page 14

is decorated with stars and moons, she could play with that theme. Her excitement grew as a creative idea began to take shape. She decided to combine three of her services, toss in a free relaxation CD, call it “The Celestial Moment” and charge \$125 for the package. What a dramatic difference the name and packaging can make.

No matter what your product or service, there is a memorable way to package and rename it. Keep in mind the name doesn’t have to stick around forever. Sometimes short term gimmicks and specials work great, too. Look at the Subway deal – \$5.00 foot longs. They attach a catchy jingle and the next thing you know you are driving down the road hungry and humming, looking for the next Subway. In time, this campaign will have run its course and the marketing geniuses at the sandwich shop will turn out a new idea. What is your great idea? Can’t come up with one? Call me; this is my favorite thing to do and we can mold an idea for you on the spot.

Sizzle

You have all heard the phrase “don’t sell the steak, sell the sizzle.” It first appeared in 1936 when Elmer Wheeler, a salesman extraordinaire, deemed it to be the principle of making a sale. What he meant was a good salesman doesn’t just focus on the product; he also puts a spotlight on features and benefits that motivate the customer. For example, years ago Pizza Hut had a campaign that was fantastic in theory. They knew that people might be more open to pizza for lunch if it was fast. In general, those two thoughts (pizza and fast) don’t go together. Or if you do put them together, you might assume the taste would be average. So they invented the “10 minute lunch, guaranteed.” After you placed your order with the server, a timer was propped on your table with a countdown to zero. If your pizza wasn’t on the table in the allotted ten minutes, the pizza was free. Great concept! It was a temporary campaign that isn’t advertised anymore, but the idea was spot on. Don’t sell the pizza, sell the speed.


Pop!

If you grew up in the Midwest like I did, it is likely that you refer to a carbonated beverage as “pop.” On the east coast, however, it is called “soda” and in the heart of the south, near Atlanta, everything is called “Coke.” I once asked a waitress in Rhode Island what kind of pop they had. The girl stared at me like I just got off the country bumpkin bus. When I restated my question using the correct soda terminology, she rolled her eyes at me and then listed the selections without so much as a polite smile. Was I really the first customer to ever use the Midwest term for chemically sweetened water?

As business owners, we must teach our staff to speak the language of the customer. It is vital that the most commonly misused words from our customer base be translated for staff so they can bridge the communication gap. Don’t expect the customer to do that. For example, recently I had to make a visit to an oral surgeon. Alone in the exam room, I could hear the conversation in the next room. The doctor described a treatment plan with the patient using fifteen-dollar words and complicated verbs. When he finished his explanation, he asked if she had any questions. The confused patient responded, “So you’re gonna pull out the gross tooth and shove a honkin’ screw down in there.” Yep, that’s what he is going to do all right.

Connect with your customer by using words that they are familiar with. If you are selling something complicated, use metaphors or comparisons to help clarify concepts.

Another great communication skill is to learn to use customers’ words right back at them when you speak. I clearly remember early in my speaking career when a meeting planner told me over the phone exactly what they were looking for in a speaker. She was very clear about their objectives. I took careful notes, chose the areas where I had the expertise to meet her needs and then made sure I used her phrases and terminology in the course description and proposal. When she called me back she said, “You are exactly what we are looking for. You are hired!” Of course I was a perfect match for her needs, she told me precisely what those needs were. Does your staff really listen to the customers’ words and try to fill their needs?

In our current economy it is more important than ever that we stir up new business by paying close attention to how, when and why a potential customer wants to spend money with us. Maintaining a great business goes way beyond the product or service you offer. It is about the little details, stirred together to make a great buying experience. Remember our goal is to help the customer reorder, revisit and refer. We want to leave our customers stirred not shaken. 

Laurie Guest, CSP, is a professional speaker and published author from DeKalb, IL. For more information on her services, visit her website at www.SolutionsAreBrewing.com or call her office at 815-758-5580.

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MPI OCTOBER EDUCATION DAY

*By Denise Humphrey, Convention Sales Manager
with the Greater Green Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Over 70 MPI-WI members came to Green Bay for the October chapter education event on October 14 at the Hotel Sierra and KI Convention Center. For those that weren't able to attend, and for those who did, here's a recap of the fun-filled day of shopping, eating, learning and lots of networking.

The day started out with a trunk show featuring local specialty shops from the Downtown Green Bay district. Such shops included Sassy Girl Boutique, Furs and Clothing of Distinction and Haberdasher Limited, plus many more. All of the shops featured many items on-hand for attendees to browse and shop for. From jewelry to scarves, clothing to purses, it was a fun and fashionable start to the education event!

The lunch program featured guest speakers: Rob Strong, Green Bay City Planning Director, Jeff Mirkes, Executive Director of Downtown Green Bay Inc., and Brad Toll, President/CEO of the Greater Green Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau. Rob Strong started off the presentations with information on the KI Convention Center expansion project. He showed the proposed layout to feature an additional 40,000 square feet of meeting space and to connect directly with the Holiday Inn City Centre across the street. Jeff Mirkes showcased the various changes that Downtown Green Bay has gone through and the continued growth expected for the area. Brad Toll spoke about the complimentary services the Greater Green Bay CVB offers for meeting planners hosting their events in Greater Green Bay. Such services include name badges, volunteer assistance, registration assistance and help setting up tours, transportation, etc., all free-of-charge.

After enjoying an extraordinary lunch, MPI-WI members moved to the meeting room for our featured speaker, Barbara F. Dunn, ESQ. An attorney and partner with Howe & Hutson, Barbara F. Dunn, ESQ specializes in the representation of individuals, firms and organizations in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. The afternoon session focused on various meeting contracts, such as audio visual, speaker, and international contracts. Attendees asked specific questions regarding risk management, failures in past contracts, but always with the pretense, "My friend had this happen..." Barbara kept the talk light-hearted and kept our group engaged in the discussion.

Following the presentation, attendees were treated to fabulous hors d'oeuvres and an open wine bar, compliments of the Hotel Sierra. While enjoying the great food and atmosphere,

raffle items were won, including several items donated from the shops involved in the trunk show.

To top off the great day, about 40 MPI-WI members participated in the evening's activities. The group jumped onto a coach bus, compliments of the Greater Green Bay CVB, and took a restaurant tour of the Downtown Green Bay district. Stops were made at Titledown Brewing Company, Hinterland Brewery, Chefusion, Black & Tan Grille and Republic Chop-house. All of the restaurants featured unique beverages and delicious appetizers for the attendees to enjoy!

The MPI-WI Community Outreach program sponsored the Happily Ever After Animal Sanctuary, a no-kill facility. Tons of items were donated by our generous members, including: towels, sheets, bleach, dog and cat food, treats and more. All of the items filled up the trunk and back seat of my car and they were extremely excited to see all of the items! Thank you to everyone who donated to this great cause!

The October event was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who helped plan and to all who attended this great event! 🌐



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NEW MEMBERS

Please help us welcome our new members!

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Della Bloom

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Continued from page 7

able for groups. I was able to be personally involved with the “design” of the event and it was so rewarding at the end of the evening to see how great of a time everyone had and how much they enjoyed our property.”

When you buy MPI, you demonstrate your commitment, loyalty and support for your peers, our chapter, and the meetings and event industry. I encourage you to keep this supplier showcase as a handy reference and reach out to MPI-WI Chapter members for your business needs. Also, if you’ve had a great experience, pay it forward and share it with other members to help them with their business decisions. 🌐



*Marie Johnson, CMP
 2010-2011 MPI-WI President
 Meetings and Incentives
 Caledonia, WI*

MPI THANKS

As most of you are aware, my beautiful daughter Tara Lee Taylor is battling stage three triple negative breast cancer. Due to the after effects of 16 chemo treatments, she is finding it difficult to accomplish normal everyday tasks, including working at Disney’s Animal Kingdom as a zoologist. Even though she has insurance through Disney, the medical bills have started to build up and she has run out of sick and vacation leave, with surgery and radiation yet to come. Cindy Foley, CMP, Director of Sales at the Marriott Hotel West in Middleton brought up the idea of hosting a benefit and as they say, the rest is history. My MPI family really stepped up to the plate and hit it out of the ballpark for this event. We received over 30 overnight stays from MPI members and the hotels they represent throughout the state and so many other wonderful donations—over 50 items on the live auction and well over 70 raffle items. Kevin Smith, General Manager of the Marriott West in Middleton donated the facilities, a wonderful selection of food and service for the event. Many of my MPI family donated their time and efforts by volunteering at the benefit as well.

I don’t even know where to begin to thank everyone for their generosity and thoughtfulness but would like to start with:

- Cindy Foley, CMP
- Cinda Vingers, CMP
- Jen O’Branovich
- Rose Herrington
- Carmen Smalley (Jesse)
- Tami Gilbertson, CMP (Peter)
- Tina Luther, CMP
- Sue Lidstrom
- Jere Foley II for setting up the website and monitoring the on-line donation/auction site
- Taj with Music on the Move for donating the DJ (Q and Kenda who did a wonderful job) and photo booth
- Sig Mullond & Jere Foley for handling the auction masterfully

They were all invaluable during the planning and hosting of the event.

So many people who don’t know Tara personally donated so much, and it has totally restored my faith in my fellow human beings. Again, I would like to thank everyone for all they did for my daughter and my family. Please keep your prayers coming. 🌐

*Sherry Lee, CMP
 League of Wisconsin Municipalities*



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WHO'S ^{IN THE} NEWS

Changes & Accomplishments

*"We must overcome the notion that we must be regular... it robs you of the chance to be extraordinary and leads you to the mediocre."
-Uta Hagen*

Congratulations on promotions
and new adventures to:

Matt Henning on his new position as Assistant
Director of Sales at the Chula Vista Resort.

Congratulations to **Kathy Gilbertson**, Association
of Wisconsin School Administrators, for being recog-
nized by the Greater Madison Convention & Visitor
Bureau and the City of Madison for her volunteer ef-
forts in bringing meetings, conventions and events
to Madison.

It seems to be awards season for **The Crowne Pla-
za® Milwaukee West**. They have been awarded the
2010 Torchbearer Award for excellence in quality
and customer service by InterContinental Hotels
Group (IHG). The hotel has also received the **New-
comer Award** and **Meeting Service Excellence
recognition** from IHG, and the **Gold Award** from
the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)
Wisconsin Chapter.

InBusiness magazine has ranked the *"InBusiness
Preferred Local venue for Business Meetings/Events."*
Congratulations to **Monona Terrace, Madison Club,
Marriott Madison West** and **Alliant Energy Center**.



Michelle Johnson is the Director of
Business Development, NorthCoast Pro-
ductions. NorthCoast Productions is a
full-service multi-media/video production
and marketing studio ([michelle@north-
coastpro.com](mailto:michelle@north-coastpro.com))

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SUPPLIER PROFILE: ROLFE NERVIG

Place of Employment: Studio Gear, Madison, WI office

Job Title: Business Developer

How long in the meetings industry? One year

How long in MPI? Two months

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

Studio Gear is a premier provider of audio/video/and lighting services for conferences, conventions, marketing events, fund-raising events, etc. The company has been in business for over 20 years in Milwaukee and more recently in Madison. We assist organizations to enhance their events with special lighting, sound systems, video cameras and projectors, and creative staging; we also provide basics for smaller meetings, including a simple video projector and screen and microphones. Studio Gear supports this equipment with a highly knowledgeable and innovative technical staff.

My responsibility is to build business relationships and gain visibility for Studio Gear in the Madison/South Central Wisconsin Area where the company is not as well known.

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with: A new member, so haven't gotten involved in anything yet.

Tell us about your family: My wife, Mary, is a psychotherapist in private practice. We have four adult children and five grandchildren.

Where were you born? Albert Lea, Minn.

Where do you currently live? McFarland, WI, but we have lived most of our lives in Milwaukee.

Favorite Pastimes: Reading a wide array of material; playing with my three year old granddaughter; watching sports on TV; attending plays.

Favorite Musical Group: Prefer classical music, but also jazz and blues, and sacred choral music.


Person you admire most and why: My former employer, Steve Skolaski, who was the owner of MasterGraphics. I admire him for his vision, drive, entrepreneurial spirit, and willingness to take risks; also for his empathy for people -- particularly people in need.

Dream Vacation: The south of France -- we visited there when our youngest daughter lived there and taught English. The history and culture were marvelous!

If I won the lottery I would: Invest the money for a decent return to enable my wife to cut back on her work schedule.

Words to live by: Walk humbly, do justice, and serve others.

Special personal accomplishments: Started a branch office for MasterGraphics in Milwaukee from scratch that grew to include over 30 staff and \$ 7 million in sales, while building trusting business relationships with business partners and assisting staff to grow in their careers. With my wife, raising four children to become responsible, caring adults.

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you? I have been very impressed with the energy and involvement of MPI members; I look forward to getting to know people in the organization and becoming involved in the programs and activities. 



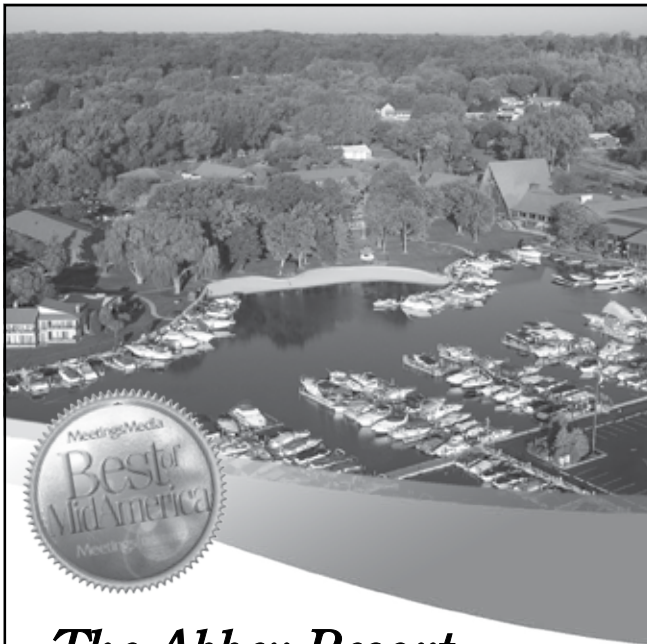
VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Tom Graybill really stepped up for our Annual Chapter Gala to not only serve on the committee, but also have his company, Tri-Marq, manage the program, the script, and audio visual for the evening. On top of these time intensive assignments, Tom also volunteered to be the evening's emcee.

The evening was amazing, and Tom was a trooper. He was very sick with a cold and fever, but he knew the show must go on! Tom took center stage and managed the program beautifully. So many comments were forwarded that the Gala was the best in memory for recognizing members, moving the program along, and having it be so entertaining.

Most recently, Tom spoke with Michelle Johnson at the MPI 2010 Midwest Regional Conference in St. Paul. They lead a breakout session entitled "Stars of the Stage and Screen: Enhancing Meetings with Media", and I have heard it was phenomenal!

Tom-a big thank you for volunteering for our Chapter!



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along the way that just might be blueprints for the future of meetings. His insights from his post atop our global organization were a definite highlight of the day.

The Supplier Showcase was bustling with networking, laughter and a wonderful lunch as members visited the booths of nearly 70 exhibitors and sponsors. This is an extremely important commitment made by our supplier members to our chapters. Thank you to the supplier members for their continued support and to our planner members for taking the time to visit and thank the exhibitors. Hopefully you even found that next great partnership!!

The afternoon sessions continued the theme of the conference as well. Seth Mattison repeated his session for those wanting to learn tips for embracing all generations in the workplace and in our events. Bryan Dodge shared his tips and tricks with planners on negotiation and communication skills. Rob Bell presented another important topic on team work for the workplace and for successful events. Wrapping up our sessions was a security panel with four very experienced facility veterans who have worked major events and helped attendees to understand important things to think about regarding security.

Our very own Wisconsin Chapter President, Marie Johnson, CMP, wrapped up the day with a thank you to the team and the final raffle of the day. It was awesome to see so many people who stayed with us through the day. A somewhat quieter bus ride brought us back to Wisconsin, armed with new friends, colleagues and renewed energy for the meetings industry that we all call home.

And we could not have pulled this off without the tireless support of our Chapter Administrators, Nonprofit Solutions from Minnesota, and Wisconsin Chapter Administrators Morgan Data Solutions. Thank you Heather, Christopher and your entire team at MDS! 



Alison Huber, CMP is the 2010-11 Director of Professional Development and Sales Manager for the Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Featuring: Chef Michael Downey

Hyatt Regency Milwaukee–Bistro Bar 333



Exquisite dishes and creative presentations are trademarks of Chef Michael Downey. With over ten years experience at four and five diamond resorts and restaurants throughout Wisconsin, Downey applies a Midwestern touch to his latest endeavor - Bistro 333.

Venturing into comfortable and unique plates that tout indigenous preparations and local ingredients, his menus go beyond new American to highlight the rich culinary traditions found in home kitchens across Wisconsin. The result? Comfortable Midwestern fare at its purest.

Downey is a graduate of the Western Culinary Academy in Portland, Ore. where he was trained in French cuisine.



Shrimp & Scallop Duet

- 3 ea. 16/20 Raw Shrimp P&D tail-on
- 2 ea. U10 Scallops, abductor muscle removed
- 1 tsp. Southwest Seasoning (Recipe Below)
- 1 ½ oz. Olive Oil
- 2 oz. Roasted Corn Salsa (Recipe Below)
- 5 ea. Blanched Asparagus
 1. Season Shrimp & Scallop with Southwest Seasoning
 2. Pre-heat sauté pan with olive oil. Cook and sauté Shrimp to medium-well and Scallop to medium.
 3. Spoon Corn Salsa into center of plate.
 4. Place one Scallop on each side of the salsa, and Shrimp on top of Salsa.
 5. Garnish with Grilled Asparagus.

Roasted Corn Salsa

- 1 cup Fresh Corn Kernels
- 1 ea. Green Bell Pepper, Roasted, Skinned & Seeded
- 1 ea. Yellow Bell Pepper, Roasted, Skinned & Seeded
- 1 ea. Red Bell Pepper, Roasted, Skinned & Seeded
- 1 ea. Jalapeno, Roasted, Skinned & Seeded
- 2 tbsp Minced Cilantro
- 2 oz. White Wine Vinegar
- 1.5 oz. Olive Oil
- 2 tbsp Thai Chili Sauce
- tst Salt & Pepper
 1. Dice Peppers/Jalapeno.
 2. Combine all ingredients in bowl and mix.
 3. Add Salt & Pepper to taste.



Southwest Seasoning

- ¼ cup Coarse Black Pepper
- ¼ Cup Paprika
- ¼ Granulated Garlic
- ¼ Chili powder
- ¼ Coriander Powder
- 1 tbsp Onion Salt
- 1 tbsp Cayenne Pepper
 1. Combine all ingredients together.
 2. Use as needed.



WISCONSIN
CHAPTER



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Datebook:

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JANUARY 2011

8

CMP Exam

Various Locations

FEBRUARY 2011

10

Education Event

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Madison

MARCH 2011

17

March Education

Potawatomi Bingo Casino
Milwaukee

APRIL 2011

14

April Education

The Osthoff Resort
Elkhart Lake