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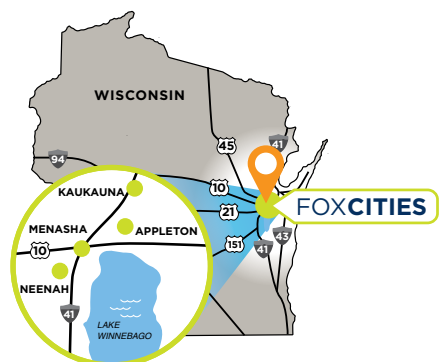
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Happy Autumn Everyone!

It's that time of year again when the trees begin to turn and the hustle and bustle of summer activities wind down. The summer months were busy with networking opportunities, and this fall will be no different! We will begin with the MPI Awards Gala at Lambeau Field in Green Bay on September 14th. Then as we move into October, we will be having our

Chapter Education at the famous Harley Davidson Museum in Milwaukee on October 13th. Finally, be sure to join the Indiana and Michigan chapters for a great learning and networking experience in November at the Great Lakes Education Summit in Kalamazoo, MI.

As fall begins, it may be a good opportunity to refocus on what the last quarter of the year holds and how goals can be met before the year comes to an end. The theme of this issue is discovering the ways an 'unconventional' idea can create unique opportunities and experiences. Take a look back at what you did the first half of this year and consider how a little spark of something different could take the same idea in a fresh direction. Welcome the new season as a season of unconventional innovation!

I wish you all the best and look forward to meeting many of you at the upcoming events!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Calley".

Calley Van Kirk
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President's Column

[un·con·ven·tion·al]

not based on or conforming to what is generally done or believed.



What does holding an “unconventional” meeting really mean? Am I supposed to find some amazing way to suspend my attendees from the ceiling while video-mapping their content on all four-sides of an exotic

meeting space, all while on a limited budget?!? I don’t know about you but that thought is stressful and a bit exhausting!

Let’s be honest, “unconventional” means different things to different groups. For some, it may be holding the meeting in a unique venue, for others it may rest in trying out a new registration process or adopting new technology for your meetings. We’re hoping this issue of the *Agenda* will help you start to view your meetings from a different angle and find ways, even small ones, to make your group’s events (at least a little) unconventional.

From my own stash of event experience, here are some ideas:

- Do you normally have a welcome bag you give out at registration? Create a “swag buffet” with your goodies set out for your attendees to choose which items they’d like to enjoy while at your meeting.
- Have a meeting with small group discussions? Instead of several small meeting rooms (and taking up more space in a hotel or convention center), block one large room and create temporary, portable breakouts...like PSAV’s Huddle Room.
- Does your catering order look the same, meeting after meeting? Turn your F&B budget over to your venue’s culinary team to create interesting custom menus for your group and ask them to showcase something specific for you. In my experience,

culinary teams are bursting with creativity so give them a shot to go unconventional for your group.

- Is your group health/fitness conscious? Create a custom scavenger hunt for your attendees (i.e. Goose Chase, Stray Boots) or hire a local trainer to lead impromptu fitness mini-classes in the pre-function space during your breaks.
- Want something even more unconventional and health conscious? Plan walking meetings if you have small group brainstorming sessions or the like.

The ideas aren’t just for Meeting Planners. As Suppliers, be on the lookout for creative solutions for your clients.

- For hotels/venues, consider currently un-used or under-used space that could be utilized by a group. Some of you are fortunate to have obvious unconventional space...rooftop lounges, outdoor tents, yachts/boats or train cars, but not every facility has “unique” and “unconventional” space that’s so easy to see. Do you have a Chef’s office that could be used for a small VIP meeting overlooking the hustle and bustle of the kitchen? Or maybe your pool area has a large deck space that could be closed off for a morning breakout session when the pool is largely unused?
- For other suppliers, whether it’s providing décor, production pieces or namebadges, help your clients think outside the box. I’m a planner and I’ll be the first one to admit I can struggle with creativity...we’re not all “idea people”! I look to my trusted suppliers to help me come up with creative solutions for my events.

The key to planning a successful unconventional meeting is to listen to your clients and stakeholders. Once you truly understand the objectives for their event you’ll better be able to brainstorm out of the box.

Here in our MPI-Wisconsin world, we've got some unconventional things up our sleeves for this year too! From unconventional locations to venues with unique meeting spaces, the event teams have been challenged to be creative and unconventional as they work through the details for our chapter events this year.

Immediately ahead of us is an incredible example of unconventional...our annual Awards Gala at Lambeau Field in Green Bay! I mean, really?!? How many other MPI chapters get to hold their annual recognition event at an NFL stadium? I bet not many. And NONE of them get to celebrate in THE BEST ONE! As a native Wisconsinite and granddaughter of a die-hard Packer fan, I am beyond excited to stand on "hallowed" ground as we recognize the hard work of all our MPI volunteers. If you haven't bought your tickets yet, be sure to get them on our website at mpiwi.org.

After an amazing night at Lambeau, we'll meet again in October for our monthly education event at the Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee (another great unconventional meeting venue!) Our speaker, Jeannie Power, will jump start all of us on better social media plans for our events. In November, we're off to Michigan for the 3rd annual Great Lakes Education Summit (GLES) in Kalamazoo! If you're a Planner, be sure to register early to take advantage of the early-bird pricing. Check out the sponsorship, exhibit table and silent auction options to get your company in front of this expanded audience of Midwestern industry professionals.

Here's to being a little unconventional this year, MPI!



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Staying Up to Date: Social Media for Events

*By: Jeannie M. Power, CMP, DES
Co-Founder / Event Technologist, Power Event Group*

Technology and social media are changing at an extremely fast pace and it does not look like it will be slowing down anytime soon. You can find hundreds of articles on the basics of social media, but even those cannot help you keep up with the changing times. Instead of reviewing simply the basics, let's take a different approach and take a look at some of the new things that are happening in social media and how you can easily integrate them into your meetings or events.

Live Streaming



Live streaming is simply recording a video and broadcasting it live over the internet, directly through your social media channels. While originally complicated and unreliable, live streaming has become much easier with advances in the technology from Periscope (Twitter), Facebook Live, and YouTube Live. Meeting and event planners can easily incorporate these live streaming tools as a way to promote events and engage their audience before, during, and after an event. By live streaming certain portions of your event, you can reach people that were not able to attend, engage those that are attending, and generate excitement and interest throughout your audience.

If you are nervous about integrating this into your event, test the waters and practice by recording short live stream interviews with your speakers, sponsors, or prominent attendees. This can happen before, during, or after your event. If you are just starting the live streaming experience, don't forget to promote your plan in advance so your audience can watch for it.

You also need to consider the legal issues regarding live streaming, whether from you or your attendees. Whether you are aware of it or not, attendees are already live streaming portions of your events and conferences from their mobile devices at an increasing rate. Planners need to have new conversations with their speakers to determine whether or not they will allow their presentation to be live streamed. If you plan on live streaming some of your event, you need to make

your attendees aware by posting a notice at the event and/or in the registration process. If individual speakers will not allow it, this also needs to be communicated with the audience.

Snapchat



Snapchat is an application that allows users to send photos to each other, and has become extremely popular. Filters that can be added to a user's images are probably the most popular feature on Snapchat. While other social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook also have filters available, Snapchat launched their On-Demand Geofilter earlier this year. This filter has the ability to apply a filter that is unique to the particular location where the photo was taken.

Snapchat is also different than the other platforms because they allow people to create and purchase custom On-Demand Geofilters. Planners can take advantage of this feature by creating custom filters that have an event logo or name integrated into it! You are able to create the artwork, choose the dates, times, and location you would like your filter to be available. The cost of the filter will depend on the number of days and the size of the geographic area where the filter would be available. We'll be demonstrating how to use a Snapchat Geofilter at the MPI Wisconsin Chapter event on October 13, 2016, at the Harley Davidson Museum in Milwaukee.

Instagram



Instagram is another social media tool that is used for sharing media. While Instagram is not really a new product, it is becoming increasingly more popular for promoting events, especially those who are more visual. It's a great way to share event photos and short videos with your audience. You can share photos from previous events, behind the scenes images, quick welcome and update videos or event up-to-the-minute images from your event.

Behind the Scenes

Using social media is a great way to provide “bonus exclusive content” for your followers. Use your social media outlets to share behind the scenes content, and give your attendees a peek behind the curtain. You can generate pre-event excitement by sharing photos of staff getting ready for the event, arriving on-site, and even excited set-up shots. Integrate all of your social media channels in the way that best suits them, and their audiences. Post a few photos on Instagram. Tweet out some excited cheers on Twitter. Live stream the AV scaffolding going up or a quick welcome message. These authentic moments are what people are craving now, and it will create a stronger personal connection with your attendees.

Customer Service Opportunities

One of the most important ways to use social media today is to listen to your audience. If something is going good, they will let you know. If something is going wrong, they will definitely let you know. Social media has become the new customer service line. By having a dedicated social media person on your staff, you can consistently monitor your social media channels and solve any issues that may come up.

If an attendee posts something about long wait times or there not being enough chairs in the room, you should have someone available to immediately respond to their message, acknowledge that you hear them, and work to solve the problem if necessary. Whether you receive positive or negative comments, people today expect and love the immediate engagement. Don't just sit and watch people interact. Take the opportunity to engage with your attendees and build that personal connection.

Conclusion

Social media is constantly changing and evolving. Knowing how and when to integrate it into your events can sometimes be tricky, but is not difficult. It just takes time. Integrate a social media plan into your planning activities, so you can see all the marketing channels you have available to you. Whether you are just starting out with your social media plan or have been integrating it for a while, it is critical to share interesting and unique content to your attendees. Be authentic with your audience. Your goal should be to engage with your followers, not sell to them. By engaging them, you are building your brand awareness and strengthening the connection you have with them. ●



Jeannie Power, CMP, DES
Co-Founder, Event Planner,
& Event Technologist
(a.k.a. @evntgrll and event tech ninja)

Jeannie is a dynamic player in the event industry, with almost 20 years of experience. She started her first company, Event Elements, in upstate New York in 2004. Jeannie is a leading expert in the rapidly changing event technology field. With both event planning and technology expertise (and obsession with the newest tech gadgets!), Jeannie is able to speak the language of the event planner, and bridge the gap when it comes to event technology.

She earned her CMP (Certified Meeting Professional) from the Convention Industry Council in 2007 and her DES (Digital Event Strategist) Certification in 2016. Jeannie enjoys the challenge of creating a customized and engaging attendee experience by thoughtfully integrating event technology. She has over 10 years of experience in online event registration management using a variety of software systems. Jeannie has extensive experience integrating mobile apps and gamification into meetings and event design, and holds a Level 1 certification in Gamification Design. She is intrigued by the psychology behind integrating game thinking and mechanics into non-game contexts to solve problems and achieve goals. Jeannie is also a social media fangirl and is addicted to sharing information to improve the hospitality industry.

Jeannie is a past president of Meeting Professionals International - Virginia Chapter and continues to play a key role in the organization. She is a speaker on event technology, speaking at events such as CMP Conclave, Smart Meetings, HSMAI MEET National, Reston Herndon Meeting Planners and the Virginia, Tennessee, and Philadelphia Chapters of Meeting Professionals International.

In her spare time, Jeannie volunteers with Adopt-A-Spot Dalmatian rescue, enjoys geocaching with her family and long naps on the weekends.

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Annual Summer Spectacular at Lake Lawn Resort

Thank you to all of our golfers, sponsors and volunteers for making the annual Summer Spectacular at Lake Lawn Resort such an amazing day.

Despite the weather's attempt to put a damper on the morning, the Golf Outing and Scavenger hunt were both very successful. Turnout was great and sponsors were thrilled that all attendees were on the golf course for a portion of the day. The welcomed sunshine made for a gorgeous afternoon both on the course and on the double-decker pontoon boat.

Prior to the events, Janet Sperstad of Madison Area Technical College presented a visual lesson in event design. She showcased room sets that influence decision making and drive innovation as well as sets that negatively impact the participant's experience. A few new concepts created a buzz, including the new break-out pod from PSAV.

We would like to thank all our sponsors for their support:

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A special thank you to all who donated a raffle item, volunteered their time or attended the event. If you are interested in getting involved in next year's golf outing, please contact Tracey Bockhop at tracey@meetmeetings.com. 🌟





What MPI Means to Me

There was a time in my life when I thirsted for knowledge of this industry. I was so eager to learn from other meeting professionals that I knew, and put what I learned in action. A simple invitation lured me to my first meeting with MPI, and I loved every minute of it. Friendly people, a great speaker, meaningful connections, and impactful entertainment were all elements that I distinctly remember.

Afterwards, all I could think about was the next event, and the people that I met. Being someone who is eager to learn, and loves to take notes, I found myself anticipating the next meeting. In time, those friendly people that I met the first time, were now friends. I started to take an interest in volunteering not too much later. I did it to help, but also to connect with those friends and to meet more industry professionals.

My journey with MPI has been very rewarding. I've met many connections that have aided me through my career. My volunteerism and engagement with the chapter has taken me from a Rising Star to a Chapter President. My learnings have enhanced my workplace experiences. These are just a few of the things that makes MPI shine.

MPI isn't just an "organization" for meeting professionals. MPI is a place you could quickly call home, and its members' family – MPI family. When you come to your first meeting, it can be a little intimidating, but taking the risk in going out on a limb and connecting with one person can make all the difference in really finding out what MPI means to you. And hopefully what you find is a community. A place where meeting professionals meet up, have fun, learn, and take care of each other.

If you haven't already, take a step out and get to an event, or volunteer to connect with people in the industry. You'll be happy you did – I know I am! 🌟

Biography

Naomi Tucker, CMP is past president of MPI Wisconsin Chapter, and Sr. Strategic Account Manager at Meetings & Incentives Worldwide, Inc. She has more than twenty years of experience planning meetings and events, and loves to write about her learnings in this industry at her personal blog, Plan It on a Post-It. When she's not planning or writing about events, Naomi enjoys her family, friends, and getting lost in a good book.



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MPI – WEC Highlights and Take-Aways

My overall take-away from WEC is how friendly everyone was. No matter what session I sat in on, the group of people around me was open to discussion and sharing best practices. Attendees passing in the hallway were full of smiles. Sometimes attending business meetings alone can be a drag. The WEC conference combined with our awesome Wisconsin Chapter made for a fun, educational and engaging experience.

Leigha Schatzman – MRA

My favorite memory from WEC 2016 was the opening general session with the Water Coolers. WEC is a time when my passion for my job gets renewed and watching the Water Coolers poke fun at us definitely did that!

Jennifer Mell, CMP – Travel Leaders

My take away was that our industry is constantly changing and evolving, and it is always fantastic to go to WEC and get caught up on the latest innovations, strategies, and trends. Plus not only do I get to see my MPI friends from across the country, I always make new connections at every WEC that can help me better serve my clients.

Tom Graybill – Tri-Marq Communications

It was my intent to attend WEC and forge into the educational aspect; stay ahead of the game in the technology world, contract “do’s & don’ts,” and setting the perfect stage for a meeting, but I came away with so much more. The business & personal connections I have made during the WEC event helped me understand that I have so many more resources available to me. People are so willing to talk with you and provide you the confidence you need to push yourself to the next level. Educational coaching was a bonus to have onsite.

Cara Wallner – Kohl’s

Shiza Shahid during the flashpoint presentation, her story and inspiration had us all thinking when we left the room. It is so great to go to WEC and hear all these stories and know you too can make a difference.

Tracey Bockhop – Meet Meetings

Favorite memories of WEC 2016 were the opening and general session. The speakers were so inspirational, I could have listened to them all day. I also loved that there were so many great networking events and many opportunities to meet up with the MPI-WI Chapter attendees. This was my first time going to WEC and I’d definitely go again.

Nicole Ellickson, CMP – Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

Atlantic City and Caesars really rolled out the red carpet for us and provided fun and unique ways to build relationships and meet new people.

Danielle Ziegler, CMP, CVT – Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau

WEC was my first National MPI event that I was able to attend. It offered exceptional educational lectures on a variety of useful topics that made it hard to select only one session at a time. WEC also did an excellent job in offering a variety of different learning experiences and networking events to participate in.

Brooke Miller, CMP – The Rees Group, Inc.



▲ Sandcastle



▲ Gathering on the beach



▲ PC Nametag team



▲ Train-Rendezvous



▲ Closing event at Harrah's Pool



▲ Foyer break



▲ General session



▲ Brian Stevens, MPI Chair-Elect, ConferenceDirect



▲ "The Crew" - lifeguard boat



▲ Mae Ibe & Tracey Bockhop

MPI- WEC EXPERIENCE

Through a First-Timer's Point of View

By: Cathe Gorske – Student at Milwaukee Area Technical College

“Reinvention” was the theme of this year’s MPI World Education Congress, and for this first-timer, that theme couldn’t have been more appropriate. I am coming back to the event industry after having worked as a print media buyer for the past 15 years. I left my most recent job at Kohl’s corporate not because I wanted to, but because my department was outsourced to an ad agency in Chicago. So here I am, back on the path I had hoped to take over 25 years ago when I was a lowly conference assistant at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown’s Summer Conference operations.

As an event management student at Milwaukee Area Technical College, I was eligible to apply for a scholarship for WEC. I remember many speakers at the MPI-WI education events I’d attended mention how many scholarships go unused and being encouraged to apply for them, so on the deadline day of March 31st, I applied. I was shocked to see I’d been chosen for a Wyndham Worldwide scholarship while I was taking a break from the registration desk at the MATC Five Star Food and Wine Tasting event on April 21.



▲ Rick Springfield

After attending so many education events for the WI chapter and seeing how the host properties pulled out all of the stops for us, I assumed that the WEC would be a pretty big deal and I wasn’t wrong. The entire experience, from the opening night beach party, to the closing lunch mini concert with Rick Springfield, was all

top-notch. I took so many pictures of unique room set ups, snack displays and therapy dogs that by the end of the last lunch, my phone was screaming that it was full. I imagine that the planners who attended went home with a ton of ways to breathe new life into their events.

One of the more impactful reinventions that I liked the most was the seating configuration of the general session

room. Most of the time, this room at a conference is a sea of 8-top dinner tables. Not so this time. The room was flanked with four big screens and a center stage in the middle of the room. The rest of the room was a mix of café two and four tops, high boys, leather banquettes and low comfy couches. There was something for everyone’s taste. I’d been reading a lot about this in the trade publications, but never saw it live. It certainly made people want to get to the general session on time before their favorite seating type was filled.

The education offerings were also as flexible as the general session seating. Participants had their choice of traditional hour to hour-and-a-half long sessions as well as “brainstorm” and “campfire” sessions that were in a nook off of one of the hallways but lasted only 30-45 minutes. There were also “deep-dive” sessions that lasted up to three hours. Again, there was something to accommodate everyone’s particular learning style. My favorite session was in a traditional style, hosted by Hyatt’s Corporate Director of Events, Melissa Milione, CMP, CPCE. Her topic focused on understanding food cost and how to choose the best menu to meet your budget.

One of my other favorite things was the morning magazine. If you stayed at the conference hotel a full-color, 24-page magazine was dropped at your door. It featured the highlights and pictures from the day before and included the schedule for the current day as well as more in-depth information about the day’s sessions and speakers. As a former print buyer, I can appreciate the effort it took to produce that piece each night. Although the app for the conference was great for leading you through the day, I found many people also using the print edition to help map their way.

Judging from the participant’s reactions, another huge hit was the Puppy Cuddling booth, which was sponsored by Visit Omaha. A local therapy dog group brought at least a dozen different dogs over the course of three days to interact with the participants and serve as pets away from home and to raise donations for their important work. As we saw just days later, dogs like these were dispatched to Orlando in the aftermath of the shooting at Pulse



▲ *Water Coolers*

nightclub. Speaking of dogs, one of the highlights of the conference for me was meeting another first timer, Cathie Myers, who is the meeting planner for Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab, Utah. As an avid rescue supporter, I've been following and contributing to Best Friends for years. I even went there to volunteer for my 40th birthday. To meet someone helping them achieve their goals was fantastic.

The final lunch of the conference was a preview of things to come in 2017 at the Las Vegas-hosted WEC. We champagne-toasted AC for a job well done and looked forward to what Las Vegas would hold. I was so very impressed by what Atlantic City did for us that I could only imagine what the party will be like in Las Vegas. So, if you are on the fence about going next year, the venue alone should convince you to take the plunge because I'm sure it will be AC x 10. ●



*Cathe Gorske
Student at Milwaukee
Area Technical College*

MPI Wisconsin Membership

Anniversaries

ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY (July 2015 through Aug 2016)

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- **CARI GRULKE**, Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer
- **CARYN GATES**, Manitowoc Area Visitor & Convention Bureau
- **CHERYL FLECK**, Wisconsin Counties Association
- **ROBYN STRYKER**, Four Points Sheraton Milwaukee
- **CATHLEEN CARUSO**, PC/Nametag
- **ALEXIA GLEYTEEN**, CUNA Mutual Group
- **AMY BEAL**, T and J Hospitality
- **KELLIE NORTHOUSE**, WPS Health Solutions

FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARY (July 2011 through Aug 2016)

- **TERRI MCCLAIRE**, Lake Lawn Resort

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- **LIZ HESSLER**, University Partnership for Children and Families

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Executive Chef Josh Peterson

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Chef Josh grew up in the Milwaukee suburbs, where his love for cooking began when he was just a teenager. Chef Josh began his climb up the professional ranks with the Double Tree Hotel in Madison working in various roles. Among those, he quickly became kitchen manager, where he was responsible for the management of the hotel restaurant and banquet operations.

In 2010, Chef Josh returned to his hometown to accept the position of kitchen manager for the Lowlands Restaurant Group's flagship restaurant, Café Hollander. While working as kitchen manager, the highest culinary rank within the Lowlands Restaurant Group, Chef Josh became a trusted member of the Lowlands team where he was asked to lead events among all their various properties.

In 2013, Chef Josh sought to sharpen his culinary skills and pursued a position with Levy Restaurants to help him accomplish his goals. He joined the team at the BMO Harris Bradley Center and its sister property, Turner Hall Restaurant. As a chef with Levy Restaurants, Chef Josh has had the opportunity to support grand scale event operations at the Kentucky Derby and Ravinia Music Festival. While working as a Levy team member, Chef Josh has strengthened his culinary skills while enhancing his internal desire to become a great leader in Milwaukee's food scene.

At MOTOR, Chef Josh has worked hard to expand his culinary talents. MOTOR's bold American classics celebrate the taste of life on the road, serving up the best of American culture in an inspiring setting. ●

Traditional Roadhouse Chili

Ingredients

5 lb Ground beef
1/2 lb Red, yellow and green pepper mix - diced
1/2 lb Onion - diced
1 Tbl Crushed red pepper
1 Tbl Cumin
2 Tbl Kosher salt
2 Tbl Black pepper
1 Tbl Garlic-chopped
3 Tbl Chili powder
2 lb Tomatillos
1 C BBQ sauce (*your favorite brand*)
12 Tbl Oregano
2 cans Mexican chili beans
2 ea Bay leaves
1 can Tomato Sauce



Instructions

1. In a large sauce pot, brown ground beef. Drain off fat.
2. Add onions, mixed peppers, garlic and spices, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. While chili is cooking, peel tomatillos, and boil in water for 10 minutes, or until soft. Remove from water and puree in blender.
4. Add all liquid ingredients and stir chili.
5. Add chili beans, stir and simmer chili for 1 hour.
6. Serve immediately or refrigerate.

Allow the recipe to cook for the full hour to fully develop the flavors.



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Student Profile: Donna Larsen



What drew you to the meetings industry? I actually started out in professional theater as a Stage Manager, which is a cross between an events manager and a project manager for theater productions. I changed my focus to meeting management so I could plant some permanent roots (you move a lot when you work in theater!) while still using my skills.

Tell us about your college program: I am getting a focused associates degree in meeting and event management at Madison College. I am thoroughly enjoying my classes! I am fortunate to have a bachelor's degree in technical theatre and non-profit management, so with some hard work I will be able to finish the associates degree this spring, after 1.5 years of coursework.

Tell us about your family: I am an only child and was raised by my mother, but I now also have a wonderful stepfather.

Where were you born? I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, but I moved to Madison when I was three. I am a Wisconsinite at heart.

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with: I haven't

worked on any project for MPI yet, but I am on the planning committee for the Alzheimer's

Association's Walk to End Alzheimer's that is taking place on October 2.

Where do you currently live? I live on the north side of Madison. I get to see a lot of free fireworks from the Mallards stadium! Go Ducks!

Dream Vacation: I would love to go backpacking through New Zealand. I love being out in nature.

Person you admire most and why: My mother is my biggest inspiration. She raised me all by herself and managed to develop a fascinating career at the same time – designing the databases that run a business. She is my role model as a person and as a businesswoman.

WHO'S IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to **Denise Humphrey** from the Green Bay CVB and her husband who welcomed a new baby boy, Preston, into the world on June 10th.

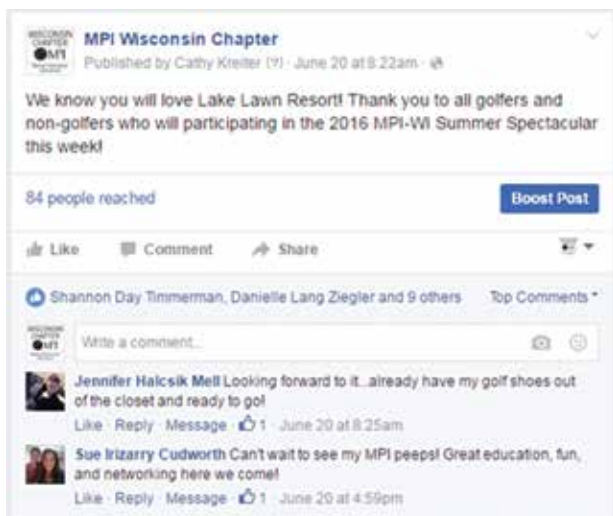
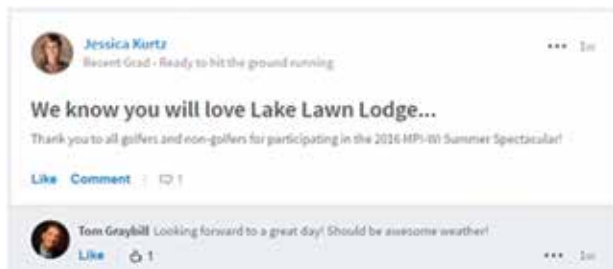
Tamara Putney Jesswein, CMP, has accepted the position of Corporate Events Director at HID Global. Tamara is the Director of Monthly Programming for MPI Wisconsin Chapter. Best of luck, Tamara!

Radisson Hotel & Conference Center Green Bay took home the coveted Sales Team of the Year and President's Award honors at the Aimbridge Hospitality Annual Conference last month in Orlando, Florida. Job well done, Radisson Hotel!

Elizabeth Unruh was welcomed to the Board of Directors as the new Director of Strategic Alliances, Sponsorships & Fundraising! Welcome, Liz!

Marcus Hotels & Resorts announced that four of its owned and managed properties have again received the AAA Four Diamond Award in 2016 - The Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, The Grand Geneva Resort & Spa in Lake Geneva, Skirvin Hilton in Oklahoma City, and the Hilton Milwaukee City Center. Congratulations Marcus Hotels!

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PLANNING A MEETING IN CHINA: My Tips & Takeaways

By: Brooke Miller, CMP



▲ Brooke Miller, CMP with Beijing Normal University China Conference hosts

Most planners will agree to “never let them see you sweat;” however, planning an international meeting can challenge this credo for even the most experienced professional meeting planner. After planning an international meeting in Beijing, China, which took place during the hottest time of year, in a dense urban environment situated in a tropical climate, adhering to the credo can be literally more difficult than anticipated. As a result of extensive and highly detailed preparation, research to better understand the Chinese culture, conforming to cultural expectations, and maintaining positive business relationships with on-site contacts; the meeting was as personally and professionally rewarding as it was successful.

As professional meeting planners, we know relationship-building with your on-site contacts can make or break an event, and often helps you to get that creative edge to set your meeting apart from the past. Below are few tips I would like to share on how I bridged some of the communication and cultural differences to plan a positive and successful meeting event in Asia.

SITUATION: Paramount to successfully planning international meetings is cross-cultural communication. We all know communication is key to avoid unwanted meeting surprises; bridging the cultural gap will help your work hours be more manageable and efficient. It is also exceedingly important to understand the preferred communication method of the recipient, especially when language and other business practice barriers already exist. Establishing roles and how information would be shared aided the lengthy planning process and clearly delineated tasks.

TIP: *Methods of communication will vary in every culture. In China, I learned that more attention is focused on what is said (in words) than how it is said per tone and body language. Finding a resource to help understand communication tendencies in your event country is a good place to begin. For example, I'd recommend the book: "Say Anything to Anyone, Anywhere!" by Gayle Cotton.*

SITUATION: At a minimum, I arranged monthly conference calls, and when possible video conference calls, to help keep international contacts on the same page and improve the exchange of information. The consistent meeting time frames helped to maintain accountability to deadlines and continued to strengthen the business relationships. As the Annual Meeting neared, we scheduled bi-weekly videoconference calls. I also made efforts to utilize technology (internet, web-based apps, websites, texting, etc.) to the extent possible, understanding there were technical and/or political limitations with what was available and permitted. According to Wikipedia.org, since 2015 over 3,000 websites such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Dropbox, Gmail, YouTube, and many more were blocked in mainland China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau) under the country's policy of Internet censorship. Be aware websites may be intermittently unavailable.

TIP: *As a professional courtesy, as we got closer to the Annual Meeting, I started working later hours (8 pm to 12 midnight central standard time) to conduct business during their time zone which was 13 hours ahead. This afforded me quicker response times, more frequent dialogue back and forth with hosts and vendors, and ultimately helped to avoid unnecessary stress due to the response time lag that usually occurs.*

SITUATION: The Chinese are just as proud of their country and culture as we are in the United States. You will win points for efforts to use their language and/or demonstrate knowledge of their culture. It is important to note that the Chinese culture is more relationship-oriented. Taking the time to learn more about your colleagues/vendors, practicing email etiquette at all times, and addressing each person with an honorific title until they allow you to use their first name, are all great ways to start your personalized relationship-building.

TIP: *Anticipate being asked personal questions regarding marital status, family, age, job, or income, because this is done to seek common ground. Never write things in red ink -- it symbolizes protest or severe criticism. Avoid potentially offensive hand gestures, therefore, open-handed gestures are generally considered safe.*

SITUATION: Just as it is important to be socially aware, it is also important to demonstrate your professionalism by being organized, proactive, and understanding of cultural time expectations. I set timelines, deadlines, and arranged

for periodic conference calls (weekly/bi-weekly/monthly) to ensure all parties understood what “on time” truly means. For example, the Chinese culture is strictly “on time.” Punctuality is considered a virtue in China. The U.S. professional culture is also “on time,” but we are known to be flexible if things come up. Being aware of this important Chinese professional expectation, I made an extra effort to be ahead of schedule and always respectful of their time once a meeting was planned.

TIP: *When receiving someone’s business card, accept it with both hands with a slight bow, read it in their presence, and store it safely away in their presence. Do not bend or write on their card. Lastly, it is business etiquette to bring your hosts a gift in the Chinese culture. Not only is the choice of the gift important, but how much you spend on it, how you wrap it, and how you present it are equally important.*

Although my brief discussion is only scraping the surface on all that goes into planning an international meeting, below are a few additional recommendations to help keep things running smoothly and your clients satisfied:

- Ask for local help, such as a reputable DMC (PCO) to utilize their knowledge of customs, culture, and incorporate their ideas to enhance your meeting.
- To avoid translation errors, hire professional translators and triple cross translate in all marketing materials.
- Keep your attendees informed and share your research regarding customs, important Country laws, passport/visa information, and cultural differences.
- Increase your security and health measures to insure the safety of your guests.
- Have an attorney with an international law background available to review contracts and tax questions.

Planning an international meeting in China created new and exciting challenges, as well as opportunities to make new friends and business contacts, the chance to learn new customs, and to expand my business savvy. With a lot of preparation, research, and being open to new ideas and approaches, your meetings in China will also stand out from the rest! 🌟



▲ VIP board meeting luncheon event



▲ Conference refreshment break station



▲ Closing banquet reception event

Supplier Profile: Colette Kukla

**Director of Sales & Marketing, Embassy Suites by Hilton Milwaukee Brookfield/
Aimbridge Hospitality**



How long in the meetings industry? 30 years

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

Embassy Suites by Hilton Milwaukee Brookfield originally opened in 1986 as a Generation One Embassy Suites as the brand began in 1984. The hotel went independent until May 25, 2016 when it re-opened after a \$10+M renovation as the only Embassy Suites by Hilton Milwaukee Brookfield. The hotel has been and continues to be owned by a local partnership out of Oconomowoc, WI.

Aimbridge Hospitality is one of the largest and most dynamic independent management companies in North America and the Caribbean. With an award winning portfolio of over 450 hotels and resorts with more than 63,000 guestrooms, our company operates across a full spectrum of property types in addition to independent luxury, boutique, and lifestyle hotels. Our highly resourced company offers an unrivaled track record of creating and maximizing asset value and holds an enviable position as an exclusive management company approved to operate all brands within the Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, Starwood, Wyndham, and InterContinental systems as well as their respective newly launched soft brands.

I have over 17 years of experience with the Embassy Suites brand, over 20 combined with Hilton brand experience, and was tasked with the job of rebranding this hotel.

I was a member of the Chicago Chapter of MPI for many years and was involved with the membership committee.

Tell us about your family: I live in Libertyville, IL with my son Tyler, a sophomore in high school.

Where were you born? I was born in Chicago and raised in Schaumburg.

I received a degree from Michigan State University, College of Business, School of Hotel, Restaurant Management.

Person you admire and why: Jackie Kennedy and Eleanor Roosevelt, women of incredible grace and style under pressure.

Favorite Musical Group:

Bon Jovi and One Republic

Favorite Pastimes: I enjoy

hockey, (Blackhawks) football and

our beloved Cubs. Time with my family and friends is most important to me.

Favorite Musical Group: Bon Jovi and One Republic

Dream Vacation: Australia

If I won the lottery I would: Be a tiger trainer at Tiger Island in Perth, Australia and donate time and monies to fixing our education system.

Words to live by: Before something great happens, everything falls apart. Don't sweat the small stuff.

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Board Member Profile: Alison Hutchinson

Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau

Where do you currently live? Appleton; I recently moved into a new house.

How long in the meeting/event industry? I have been in MPI for 4 years and in the meetings industry for 18 years.

Tell us 2-3 things you are responsible for on the board: My position is the Director of Awards, Scholarships & Recruitment.

What is the best part of being on the board? Being on the board allows me to work closely with my peers from across the chapter and to get to know them better. It also gives me insight on the inner workings of our chap-

ter. As for professional development, I get to use a skill sets that are not in my everyday role.

What have you learned most from being on the board? As in all areas of your life, communication is very important.

What is the best advice you can give to someone who is thinking about getting more involved in MPI? There are many opportunities to volunteer. It gives you the opportunity to work on a team and meet other members. It is very rewarding to be a part of our successful chapter.

Favorite hobbies or pastimes? Entertaining, traveling and spending time with my family.



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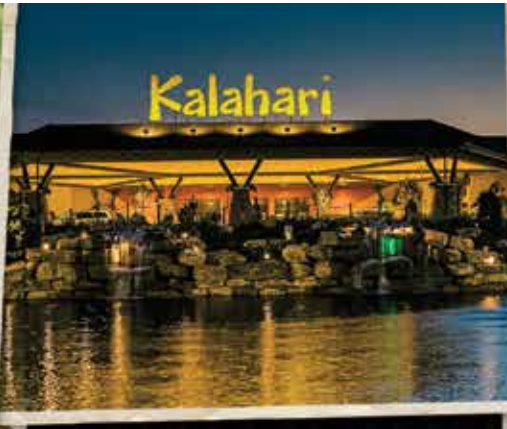
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Planner Profile: Krista Emmons

**Project Manager, Meetings iQ,
a division of Travel Leaders Corporate**

How long in the meetings industry? 16 years

How long in MPI? 3 years

Tell us about your company and/or position: Our team sources and plans programs for Mars North America (Chocolate, Petcare, Wrigley). A big part of my job is building our relationship with the different divisions in order to expand the business. I love that no two days are alike. Last December I spent 11 days driving from Charlotte to Miami, exploring cities and hotels because so many programs book on the East coast. I completed 27 site inspections in two weeks (yes, you read that right!). I am lucky enough to work from home and have an office that overlooks my backyard and the pool. My favorite way to end the day is floating and soaking in the silence.

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with: I've co-chaired the golf outing for the last two years.

Tell us about your family: I'm blessed to have such an awesome family. We're very close. My parents have been married for 43 years and live less than a mile from me. My younger brother has two kids and they live in the upper unit of my duplex. Working from home allows me the flexibility to help with the kids, especially in the summer. I can't tell you how many lunch breaks were skipped to play Marco Polo with the kids!

Favorite Pastimes: Road trips! Every year when we were little, my parents would pack us up and we'd drive somewhere far away. I've climbed the buttes in Wyoming, dug for clams on the beaches of Maine, and eaten peaches right from the stand in Georgia. One year we even pulled a camper behind our station wagon up into Canada during the hottest days of summer. It was the worst trip ever. But the memories...



Where were you born? Bay View, Wisconsin

Where do you currently live? Town of Lake, Wisconsin

Person you admire most and why: My mom. She's the kindest human being I've ever met. If I could be half the person my mom is, I'd be so lucky. Fifteen years ago my parents opened a soup kitchen to serve a few homeless people once a month. Now we serve more than 200 every week and she's still running the place.

Dream Vacation: Renting a house on the beach with my closest friends and spending our time cooking, eating, and playing games. Foodies at heart!

If I won the lottery I would:

- Pay off my house
- Hire a landscaper to finish my patio and build a deck off the back of the house
- Take a huge group of family/friends on vacation
- Invest it

Words to live by: The Golden Rule – treat others as you want to be treated.

Special personal accomplishments: Getting back on my feet after two years of unemployment. Like so many others in 2009, I lost my job. Then I cut my hand and had a ridiculously expensive surgery – without insurance. It was the worst time of my life. But I got back on my feet, slowly paid off my debt, bought a house, and have a better understanding of what a “need” is versus what a “want” is.

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you? I truly value the relationships I've made through MPI and am so energized every time I leave an MPI meeting. You people are awesome!



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