

MPINCC Annual Conference & Expo 2015

Speakers



Naomi Angel, Esq.

Naomi Angel is a partner with Howe & Hutton, Ltd., a law firm that specializes in the meetings and hospitality industry and not-for-profit organizations. Naomi works with individuals and organizations in the meetings, travel and hospitality industries, including corporate and independent planners. Additionally, she serves as General Counsel to national and international trade associations of manufacturers, suppliers, and professionals, and other providing guidance in the areas of antitrust, intellectual property, standards development, certification, accreditation, governance, contracts, international organizational issues, product liability, and risk management. Naomi is a frequent speaker for MPI, PCMA, ASAE, SGMP, SITE, ISES, and other groups in the meetings and hospitality industries. She also regularly writes articles for association journals on a wide range of legal issues. Naomi is a member of ASAE and serves on ASAE's Associations Now plus Editorial Committee; the Association Forum of Chicagoland; and the Chicago Bar Association.

Websites:

[Howe & Hutton Ltd.](#)



Jessie Backer

Jessie Backer is the Manager of Volunteers and Community Relations at Larkin Street Youth Services in San Francisco, California. She is originally from Montana and currently lives in Oakland, California. Larkin Street is a social services nonprofit that was founded 30 years ago to meet the needs of homeless youth living on the streets of San Francisco. Larkin Street provides drop in services, medical care, emergency shelters, housing, and college and career readiness support to homeless youth ages 13-24. As the Manager of Community Relations, Jessie has ample experience navigating and cultivating vibrant corporate volunteer partnerships through employee engagement.

Websites:

[Larkin Street Youth Services](#)



Corbin Ball, CSP, CMP, DES

Corbin Ball, CSP, CMP, DES is an internationally recognized expert on technology. His articles have appeared in hundreds of national international publications and he has been quoted in the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, US Today and US News & World Report. He was recently named as one of "The 25 Most Influential People in the Meetings Industry" by Successful Meetings and MeetingNews magazines, the fifth time he has been so named. Corbin has spoken to groups in 33 countries, on five continents in a manner that is engaging, understandable and fun. Corbin is the only person to have received both MPI's International Supplier of the Year and MPI's International Chapter Leader of the Year award. He can be contacted at his extensive website: www.corbinball.com and followed on twitter.com/corbinball.

Websites:

[Corbin Ball Associates](#)



Bree Brooks

Bree Brooks graduated from San Diego State University in 2010 with a Bachelors of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies. She began her career at KFMB Stations as the Events and Promotions Coordinator where she fell in love with event planning and marketing. Ms. Brooks returned to the Bay Area in 2013 and is currently the Account Executive for Entire Productions, founded in 2000, which provides talent, lighting, and A/V for corporate and social events. As a member of MPINCC she has been award "Tomorrow's Leader Award" and has been on various committees to include, MPINCC Gala, Emerging Professionals, and ACE. Specialties: Event Planning, Event Productions, Public Relations, Sales, Marketing, Promotions, Booking Talent and Social Media

Websites:

[Entire Productions](#)



Carlee Duncan, CMP

Carlee has spent the last 9 years helping doctors so they can help patients see better by managing leadership events at the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO). Carlee's passion for organizing events began as administrative assistant managing corporate events for a bay area architecture firm and her passion for the wine industry lead to a position doing sales/event management for the Chateau Elan Corporation's Diablo Grande property. After working with association planners on their events she realized that would be the next step in her career and found her job at AAO. She obtained her CMP in 2008, recertified in 2013, is an active member of the Meeting Professionals International Northern California Board as Vice President of Education and speaker for CMP University.

Websites:

[American Academy of Ophthalmology](#)



Jenna Ford

Jenna Ford has been with Genentech over 5 years in a variety of roles. Her current position is Senior Manager of the Transparency and Aggregate Spend Operations group in Commercial Compliance Operations. In this role she oversees Sunshine data readiness activities and serves as the business lead for Sunshine Track® and the Genentech Spend Submission Portal (gSSP). Sunshine Track is a secure website that allows physicians to review their Genentech Sunshine-reportable payments before they are reported to the government. The gSSP is utilized by Genentech's external logistics vendors to submit health care professional spend data for advisory boards, investigator meetings, and miscellaneous events.

Prior to Genentech, Jenna was a Client Services Manager at Advogent, partnering with biotech and pharmaceutical companies to plan speaker trainings, manage content development, and oversee speaker bureaus. Before joining Advogent, Jenna worked as a project and event manager in Washington, DC, where one of her projects was coordinating the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. "Let Freedom Ring" concert at The Kennedy Center. She started her career at WGBH in Boston as an Associate Publicist for the PBS public affairs documentary series FRONTLINE.

Jenna holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Tufts University. She lives in Palo Alto, CA with her husband and two daughters.

Websites:

[Genentech](#)



Dolores Gould

Websites:

[St. Anthony Foundation](#)



Jeff Hurt

Jeff Hurt joined Velvet Chainsaw Consulting in January 2010 and currently serves as Executive Vice President, Education and Engagement. In 2012, he was recognized as the PCMA Educator of the Year. Jeff has worked in leadership roles with five associations, five government organizations and several companies in the education, events and meetings departments, including Meeting Professionals International and Promotional Products Association International, one of the top 50 shows in the industry.

He is considered one of the leading authorities in the meetings industry on adult education, conference design, digital events and social media for events and associations. He speaks and blogs frequently about meeting and technology trends, the future of conference education, adult learning and all things meetings at velvetchainsaw.com.

Websites:

[Velvet Chainsaw Consulting](#)



Dana Marshall, CMP, CMM

Dana has over 25 years of experience in the meetings and events industry, including 10 years as Manager of Meetings and Events with Chiron Corporation and Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics, Inc. While there she influenced strategic meetings management through policy creation, vendor consolidation, per person meeting spend guidelines and meeting category spend reporting.

In addition to her corporate experience, Dana has worked in operations, account management and business development for 3rd party meeting management firms. Prior to that, she spent 8 years in hotel management and executive level positions with Harvey Hotel Company, LLC in Dallas, Texas and the Hyatt Regency San Francisco.

In 2009, Dana launched her consulting business, Meetings Defined. Since then, her work has included projects focused on defining processes for managing meetings and events spend, writing off-site meeting policies and ensuring compliance of Open Payments reporting for meetings including travel agency and logistics partners liaison.

Dana obtained the CMP designation in 1995, her CMM in 2003 and recently completed the Healthcare Meeting Compliance Certificate program. She has been an active member of MPINCC since 1997, is a Past President and is currently serving on MPI's Chapter and Membership Advisory Council.

Websites:

[Meetings Defined](#)



Christa Mekki

Christa Mekki knew from a very young age that she had a deep passion to help people discover their full potential and to enhance their overall life experiences. She earned her B.A. in Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism with a minor in Women's Studies in 2013. She is a self-motivated entrepreneur and prior to graduation launched her event planning company Magnetic Magnificent Events. She has successfully planned and executed events costing a few hundred up to six-figure price tags. Christa is known for her unparalleled attention to detail and a dedicated commitment which ensures that each client and guest leaves the event with a lasting impression. In addition to her own event planning company, she is an event strategist and consultant for Go Women Global.

Christa received the MPINCC Meeting Professional of the Year 2013-2014 in August 2014; prior to this, she received the MPINCC Meeting Professional of the 3rd Quarter 2013-2014 award. She is an Executive Board Member, California State University East Bay Alumni Association, responsible for all upcoming events. She is a member of SiteNCC. SITE (Society for Incentive Travel Excellence) is a global network of incentive travel and motivational event professionals. She is a member of PCMA Northern California

Chapter and is the current Co-Chair of the MPINCC Emerging Professional Committee. And to continually advance her global perspective, she is now a member of the GMIC whose mission is to transform the global meetings industry through sustainability.

And if event planning isn't enough, Christa can also be found on stage speaking and providing motivational training as Regional Vice President and Executive Director, LegalShield, Northern California. In addition, she provides motivational coaching and training to the sales force of Team NuVision Inc. Christa's personalized training and consulting specializes in "Brand You: Learning How to Leave Your Mark and Lasting Impression to Increase Your Sales" (see website below for more information). She continues to mentor college students and volunteers in the local school district. She is married with four children and resides in Northern California with her husband Mikal Follow Christa on her blog, at www.MagneticMagnificent.com.

Websites:

[Magnetic Magnificent Events](http://www.MagneticMagnificent.com)



Bob Mellinger

Bob Mellinger, CBCV, is the founder and president of Attainium Corp, which delivers business continuity, emergency preparedness and crisis management services. Bob is a frequent speaker on the topics of business continuity, contingency planning, emergency preparedness and crisis management, delivering sessions ranging from The Basics of Continuity Planning to the Impact of Today's Threats and Hazards, as well as customized, interactive mock-disaster tabletop exercises known as the Disaster Experience. Bob is a graduate of the University of Dayton with a major in Computer Science, and has a graduate certificate from George Washington University's Institute for Crisis, Disaster and Risk Management.

Websites:

[Attainium Corp.](http://www.AttainiumCorp.com)



Darci Motta, CMP, CITE

Darci has been with AAA for over 15 years and is currently a Senior Conference Manager specializing in incentive, conference and executive level retreat-style programs for the AAA Insurance Exchange.

Prior to becoming an event professional, Darci was an award-winning media producer who wrote, directed and produced corporate videos for the high tech, homebuilder and medical fields in the Bay Area.

Darci graduated cum laude from St Mary's College of California and has a Professional Certificate in Event Management from The George Washington University. As her passion for event planning grew, Darci has gone on to earn her CMP, CTA, CIS and is one of less than 100 event professionals worldwide to have her CITE.

She is currently Immediate Past President of SiteNCC and was the founding voice of the MPINCC twitter account, growing followers to over 1600 before turning over the reins in 2013. Darci was honored as MPINCC's Meeting Professional of the Year in 2011.

When she has "me" time, Darci enjoys traveling, taking foodie excursion, researching her family genealogy project and exploring social media.

Websites:

[CSAA](#)



John Power

As Executive Director of The Volunteer Center Serving San Francisco and San Mateo Counties, John leads an organization that for nearly 70 years has nurtured respected and long-standing relationships among the Bay Area's business, government, nonprofit and volunteer communities. John and his staff provide expertise in volunteer program development and management, business volunteer engagement strategies and practices, and community-building through service. As conveners of the national award winning Bay Area Corporate Volunteer Council, with a membership of over 35 corporations, The Volunteer Center is a conduit for connecting businesses with community organizations that see the value in building partnerships across sectors.

Prior to joining The Volunteer Center in 1999, John served for nearly a decade on the staff of San Jose Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, as her Deputy District Director and a chief policy advisor in health and human services, housing & homelessness, immigration, the environment and civil justice.

An avid volunteer, John is past Chairman of the Board of Directors of Goodwill Industries of San Francisco, San Mateo & Marin. John serves as a Governor's appointee to the Volunteer Advisory

Committee of the California Emergency Council, and is a member of the national multi-sector Reimagining Service Council, and member of its Executive Board.

He received his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley and an MBA from Santa Clara University.

Websites:

[The Volunteer Center](#)



Lou Reda

Lou Reda, Executive Director, has been with HandsOn Bay Area for 10 years. He has an eclectic background with degrees in physics and finance and a work background that includes investment banking, corporate strategy and nuclear physics research. He also spent time in New York as an actor and a playwright.

He began his work with HandsOn as the Manager of Corporate Programs. In that position he was responsible for creating service projects for some of HandsOn's largest corporate clients including Levis Strauss & Co., McKesson and Charles Schwab & Co. He was later made the Director of Corporate programs where he managed all of the Corporate Sales and Corporate Programming team. In 2006 he was promoted to Director of Programs adding the HandsOn Community Program folks to his team. As the Director of Programs he has added innovative new offerings such as the Leadership Institute Fellowship Teams (LIFT), The Small Biz program and the Adopt-A-Family program. In December 2008 Lou was named Executive Director

Lou is very happy to be a member of the HandsOn team because of the tremendous satisfaction it brings him to make a difference in the community he loves so dearly. He is fond of saying that he often feels like Santa Claus, only better because he gets to help people year round. Please feel free to contact him with any opportunity that you know of to make a difference in the Bay Area.

Websites:

[HandsOn Bay Area](#)



Steven Rudner

Meetings and Conventions magazine has recently referred to Steven Rudner as "one of the most respected meetings-industry attorneys." Rudner's firm exclusively represents literally thousands of hotels, resorts and conference centers throughout the world. The firm's clients include some of the world's largest hotel companies, prestigious independent properties, management companies, luxury collections, conference centers and others. Rudner is Past-President of the Academy of Hospitality Industry Attorneys (AHIA), and frequently speaks to industry organizations, including MPI, PCMA, HSMAI, RCMA and AH&LA. He is a member of the State Bars of New York, Texas, Arizona, Colorado and the District of Columbia. Rudner's creative approach to legal issues has twice captured the attention of The Wall Street Journal, and has made him one of the most popular speakers on issues of concern to the hospitality industry.

Websites:

[Rudner Law Offices](#)



Patricia Schaumann, CMP, CSEP, DMCP, HMCC

Pat is the Director, Professional Development, Healthcare Sector, and Meeting Professionals International.

Pat is the author of "Breaking the Code to Healthcare Compliance", 1st and 2nd Edition, a health policy resource book for meeting professionals, physicians and manufacturers that addresses the impact of the National Physician Payment Transparency Program: Open Payments (formally the Physician Payments Sunshine Act). The book is the resource for the Healthcare Meeting Compliance Certificate program being offered globally through St. Louis University and the CMP-HC. She is also the author of "The Guide to Successful Destination Management" and is a contributing editor to 5 editions of the CIC Manual.

Pat was recently recognized, for the third time, by Successful Meetings magazine as one of the 25 Most Influential People in the Meetings Industry. Her honors include being named the first recipient of the International Destination Management Professional of the Year by ADME International, named as one of the Magnificent 7 in the Global Hospitality Industry and was most recently named as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Business by the St. Louis Business Journal. Pat was also selected as Meeting Professional of the Year by the MPI-St. Louis Chapter and Event Professional of the Year by ISES-Missouri Chapter.

She is proud of her impact and roots within the Hospitality Industry. Pat currently serves on the Convention Industry Council (CIC) CMP/Healthcare Certification Governance Committee. She is past

president of Meeting Professionals International (MPI), St. Louis Chapter, Founder and Past President of the International Special Event Society (ISES-Missouri Chapter) and Past President of the Association of Destination Management Executives International (ADME).

She has served as an adjunct Professor at 4 universities and currently Co-chairs the Hospitality Management Industry Advisory Board at St. Louis University's School of Professional Studies and serves as faculty for the Healthcare Meeting Compliance Certificate.

Websites:

[Meeting Professionals International](#)



Matthew Schermerhorn, CMP

Matthew recently started Black Box Meetings, an independent meeting planning consultancy, built on his career managing meetings and travel teams at AAA, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Health Net; and heading up hotel catering and convention services departments. He is passionate about planning board and leadership meetings and international / incentives, strategic meeting management, and evolving advances in industry technology. He is proud to be an MPINCC past president. Matthew also founded and is president of Musaica, a bay area men's a cappella vocal ensemble in which he sings baritone.

Websites:

[Black Box Meetings](#)



James Spellos

James Spellos is the President of Meeting U.; a company specializing in helping people becomes more productive and comfortable with technology. Jim is certified as a Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS). He delivers over 150 seminars annually on how to use technology more efficiently, including social media. Jim is a faculty member at New York University, teaching in the School of Professional and Continuing Studies since 1990. He was honored with both their Award for Teaching Excellence and their Outstanding Service Award.

With hospitality industry colleague Corbin Ball, Jim released in 2012 the TechSpec app, helping meeting planners to assess the technology capabilities of a hotel during a site inspection.

In 2014, Jim joined the Board of Directors for Rock and Wrap It Up, and anti-poverty/hunger think tank, which supports over 43,000 agencies in North America. Jim co-created for them the Whole Earth Calculator app, which helps organization's identify the quantity of food donated and carbon footprint reduced from food recovered from meetings and events.

Outside of the meetings industry, Jim is an accomplished musician and songwriter, playing guitar, keyboards and singing for the New York City rock band Contraband. They released their first CD, "Welcome to the Neighborhood" in late 2008, and are back in the studio recording new songs for a 2015 release.

Websites:

[Meeting U.](#), [Way Cool Tools](#)



Thom Ward

Thom has a diverse background in the Hospitality Industry and has mastered the art of Sales & Marketing. He has held a variety of positions including, VP, GM, Regional and DOS for Hyatt Hotels, Atlas Hotels, Long Beach CVB, Presentation Services, Photo & Sound Company, Walt Disney Attractions and Resorts, Planet Hollywood North American, Conference Direct and NASCAR.

In 2010 his entrepreneurial spirit and energy led him to leave the corporate structure to open his company Dining Connections which has provided representation to over 80 restaurants as well as marketing solutions to hospitality groups including contracts with The Newport CVB, the RRAZZ ROOM, The Stinking Rose Corporation, the Great Lakes Brewing Company in Cleveland and Concierge Services at the Infinity and The Brannan. He is also a Conference Direct Associate.

He served as MPINCC President in 1996-1997 and on the MPI Foundation Board 1998 – 2000. He served as President of the Orange County HMSI, and the Board of Directors for SFTA (formerly SFCVB), Los Angeles HMSI and Orange County NACE.

Thom was awarded MPINCC Hall of Fame Award in 2000 and 2007 and Chicago Chapter's President's award in 2011. He has been a member of ASAE, PCMA.

Thom is a graduate of California State University, Fullerton - Journalism/Public Relations Certification from PCMA – Learning Environment Specialist (LES).

Websites:

[Dining Connections](#)



Bonnie Weiss

As the Director, Global Pharmaceutical Sales, Americas, Bonnie Weiss is responsible for Hyatt's sales and marketing efforts with key global Pharmaceutical accounts, and is based in Chicago.

Bonnie has been with Hyatt Hotels for 30+ years. Previous positions include Director of Sales of Hyatt's New York National Sales Office, Associate Director of Sales, and Travel Industry Sales Manager. In 1996 she was named Hyatt National Sales Manager of the Year, and in 1999 won the prestigious Donald N. Pritzker Award. She has worked with the Pharmaceutical Industry for 24 years, and created and developed Hyatt's Healthcare Business Exchange, which operated for 15 years. Bonnie is also on MPI's Healthcare Advisory Board.

Bonnie received a Bachelor of Science-Communications degree from Southern Illinois University, and is a member of MPI.

Websites:

[Hyatt Hotels Corporation](#)



Josh Adams

As Vice-President, Sales, Josh works closely with the streamlinevents team and strategic partners to provide results-driven, creative and cost-effective solutions to clients. With thirty years of industry experience, Josh joins the management team of streamlinevents after successful roles as Director of Field Operations at Incentive Dimensions; Account Manager at Carlson Marketing Group; and Director of Operations at Sharp Events. Josh calls on his operational background to help clients clarify their goals and objectives, create strong program identity, manage within budget parameters and measure success.

Websites:

[streamlinevents, Inc.](#)