



SACRAMENTO/
SIERRA NEVADA
CHAPTER

CONNECTS

The Quarterly Newsletter for the Sacramento/Sierra Nevada Chapter of Meeting Professionals International
Volume 36, Issue 1 • Spring 2021



[Like us on Facebook](#)



[Connect with us on LinkedIn](#)



[Follow us on Twitter](#)

WHAT'S INSIDE

Global Community.....	2
Board Nomination Slate	3
Seasonal Spectacular Overview	4
Membership Scholarship	3
Virtual Events Behind the Screen	5-7
Thank You Key Partners	8
Advertising Opportunity	9

MPISSN Events

Oh, what an adventure the 20/21 year has been for the MPISSN Education & Events team! When we began this term in July of 2020, it was my hope that at this point the future for hosting events in California would be clear and that COVID guidance would be in place. As we inch towards the second quarter of the new year, without that ever so important guidance in place, I remain optimistic and hopeful about the future of meetings and events in California. Cases and deaths relating to COVID-19 are down, vaccinations are happening, and people are ready to see their colleagues in person. The MPISSN Education and Events team is ready to make that happen as soon as it is safe to do so. To that end, it is our hope that at least one in-person, socially distanced education/event will be possible this term, likely in June. We are evaluating all options

and looking forward to putting together a program that educates members on the "new normal" for meeting in-person in California as we continue to move through the pandemic.

Until in-person events are possible, we remain committed to bringing our members together virtually through social opportunities, education webinars and forums for communication. Here is what is on the horizon! Your attendance and participation in these upcoming events are crucial to the association and we look forward to seeing you there! Full details and registration can be found at mpissn.org.

Back to Business! Meeting Contracts in a Post-COVID World – Virtual - March 25, 2021

The keys to in-person meetings are ensuring attendee safety and remaining flexible to adjust to changes like COVID spikes or delayed vaccinations. Planners and suppliers must work together to create fair contracts that allow both parties to feel comfortable about moving forward. And prospective attendees must have the confidence that their safety will be protected, and that they won't be penalized if they register for in-person but then change their mind.

This program will be led by Joshua L. Grimes, Esq., a prominent meetings industry attorney. Mr. Grimes will discuss the most significant legal issues facing those returning to in-person meetings. We will also leave plenty of time for Mr. Grimes to answer YOUR questions.

On the Same Page - March 31, 2021

On the Same Page with MPISSN has a new book! "The Giver of Stars" by Jojo Moyes. We will be discussing on March 31st at 5:00pm. If you are interested in signing up, please fill out the form by, clicking [here](#).

Survival Strategies: Lessons Learned - Virtual - April 27, 2021 at 11 a.m.

Over the past 20 years, global and country-specific incidents have had serious economic effects on business and finance, none the least of which are the traumatic and widespread impacts of Covid-19. Participate in this session to explore the bad and turn the lessons learned into best practices to start, maintain, and grow your business.

For questions, contact Katy Contreras at katy.slavin@me.com or Christine Feenstra at christine@headstartca.org



Making the Most of your Global Community!

As a member of MPI, you are connected to a global community of planners and suppliers from around the world. Not only do you have local benefits including training and networking through our Sacramento Sierra Nevada chapter, you have a suite of benefits that come along with being a member of this worldwide community. In case you haven't taken full advantage of your MPI membership dollars – here are a few key ways you can do so.

1) [Free Education through MPI Academy](#) – MPI has been continuing to add more and more Free webinars and trainings to their online resource section under MPI Academy accessible when you log in. A sampling of free webinars coming up this year include:

March 12 – WEC Grapevine: How We Did It - Digital Event Strategy & Considerations
April 1 – WEC Grapevine: How We Did It - Marketing & Communications in a Pandemic World
April 8 – Global Meetings Industry Day – Virtual
April 16 – Strategic Negotiating in the Post-Shutdown World
May 21 – Meetings Outlook – Future Predictions for the Business of Meetings

Also – in the “On Demand” portion of MPI Academy – you can access webinars such as “Ready to get back on the road? Get your company there faster with hybrid meetings solutions.” and for those of you struggling with juggling a good one entitled “Secrets to Work/Life Balance for the Working Mom.” Also found in the On Demand section is a series from last year entitled the Coronavirus Dialogue Series.

For those new to MPI, you will want to sign up to attend one of the free monthly New Membership 101 webinars to jump start your membership.

Once you register for a webinar or training it gets added to your MPI Academy and you're then able to view or access it on-demand (or live if applicable)

- 2) [The Essential Guide to Safety & Security](#) – Another FREE resource that you will want to download is found under the Resources tab in MPI Academy. This book “The Essential Guide to Safety & Security” showcases best practices as you plan for the safety & security of your meetings. If you don't have an emergency plan or need to update yours, this guide is a must.
- 3) [MPI Communities](#) - With the MPI websites now being interconnected, MPI now offers you a way to connect with the global community of members in a more direct way. For example – you can opt in to be a part of discussions in groups such as “Association Planners” “Independent and Small Business Owners” “International Meeting Professionals” and more. AND - MPI Sacramento / Sierra Nevada also has our own community where you can easily view our membership list, post comments and ask questions of your fellow chapter members. We'll plan to get some current threads of conversations going on our MPISSN Discussion forum!
- 4) [MPITV](#) – MPI has rolled out interviews and information snippets through the MPITV series. Most episodes are less than 5 minutes and feature insights from thought leaders and industry influencers.
- 5) [Meetings Outlook](#) – Updated every 6 or 12 months, be sure to take a look at the current Meetings Outlook – an overview of the meetings industry outlook. Meetings Outlook 2021 is online now.

In addition to the above free resources that are included in your MPI Membership, you will find certificate courses on Emergency Communications, Inclusive Meetings, Event Leadership, Healthcare Meetings, Entrepreneurial Strategy, Sustainable meetings and more for fees ranging from \$60 - \$600. Some newer courses include Pandemic Onsite Protocols (\$60) and the Pandemic Meeting & Event Certificate (\$556).

Finally – other online resources you'll find on MPI include the [“Find a Speaker”](#) search function, the [Career Center](#) and the [member directory](#).

If you have any questions about your member benefits, ideas on how MPISSN can serve you better or resources you're looking for – be sure to reach out to an [MPI Board member](#) or contact us at exec@mpissn.org.

MPI SSN Board Nomination Slate for 2021-2022

The Sacramento Sierra Nevada Chapter Nominating Committee has selected the following individuals, whom we believe to have the skills, dedication, and integrity to provide outstanding leadership to our chapter during their term of office. Please be aware that as a member in good standing you have the right to review and challenge the slate of directors as indicated in the chapter bylaws. If positions remain uncontested, the slate of officers will be considered approved by a unanimous vote after 30 days. Please congratulate and thank these members for their service.

The following slate of officers is elected by the Chapter Board of Directors. They are identified in this communication so members can view the full board proposed for the upcoming term.

- President, Sulema Peterson, Sulema Peterson and Assoc
- President-Elect, Lauren Siring, Monterey County CVB
- Immediate Past President, Rachel Hickerson, AMG

The following slate of Board members is elected by the membership of the Chapter. This slate will be deemed elected by unanimous vote unless the slate is challenged as outlined in the chapter bylaws.

- VP of Membership Alisha Scully, Hilton
- Director of Membership Engagement, Marques Davison, Capitol Event Center
- VP of Communications, Amy Orr, Orrganized Events
- Director of PR and Communications Skye Menezes, CA Medical Assn
- VP of Finance, Lindsay Poss, CalSAE
- Director of Strategic Alliance, Jessica Counts, CA Hotel and Lodging
- VP of Education and Events, Christine Feenstra
- Director of Education and Events, Katrina Duncan, VSP
- Director of Special Events, Leena Riggs, Visit Rancho Cordova

Seasonal Spectacular Overview

MPI Sacramento/Sierra Nevada Chapter was once again proud to partner together on an educational program at the virtual CalSAE Seasonal Spectacular on December 15-16, 2020. Moderated by Sulema H Peterson, Principal & Founder of Sulema Peterson & Associates, the panel of experts discussed Future Planning for Events in California: 2021 & Beyond. 2020 and the COVID-19 Pandemic has forever changed the events and hospitality industry. As we work towards bringing people together again in 2021, many are wondering what this will look like for events and how our industry partners are preparing to meet the challenge. Social distancing, cleaning protocols (GBAC certification), how to best implement a hybrid event, and more were addressed in this moderated panel. Over 55 attendees left this session with a better understanding of the actions the events and hospitality industry are taking to meet the needs of planners in order to gather safely in the future. Things may never look the same, but we will meet again.

Our industry partners are here to show us how to do so safely. Thank you to our content leaders: Christina Bauders, CMP, Event Services Executive of The Core Management Company, Robbie Garcia, Director of Sales & Marketing of the Sacramento Marriott Rancho Cordova, Brenda Kirian, Director of Sales of the Hyatt Regency Sacramento, and Gillian Ware, CMP, National Sales Director of the San Diego Tourism Authority.





Membership Scholarship

Please join us in congratulating the winner of our IMEX Membership Scholarship, Jennifer Mann! Jennifer Mann was Senior Sales Manager at Hyatt Regency Sacramento for 20+ years and had been an active member of MPISSN for 13 years. During her membership Jennifer volunteered her time and talents in various community outreach positions, including serving as VP of Membership. She was the presenter for the New Planner Course for several years and has dedicated time to membership calls, tradeshow, annual galas, crab feeds and fundraisers - the Crab Feed being her favorite!

To Jennifer, membership with MPISSN is a way to “stay connected with clients and colleagues during this difficult time.” Jennifer values the information and education provided by MPI Global and the Sacramento/Sierra Nevada Chapter to be “informed of the most up-to-date trends” that will assist her return to the meetings and tourism industry. MPISSN is excited for her to restore her membership with our chapter, and Jennifer is planning to volunteer with the Awards or Website committees. After feeling disconnected from the industry since March of 2020, Jennifer let us know that she is looking forward to 2021. “Both personally and professionally, I want to go back to work. Doing what I love and being part of an industry that I love. And I look forward to seeing it thrive once again,” she said.

Jennifer has felt a sense of community with the MPISSN chapter. As she states, “We are a big city with a small town feel. Love the family feel of the chapter! There are so many familiar faces at events and I feel like I can just jump into a conversation with anyone. Other chapters can feel too big and don’t always have that feeling of welcome.” Welcome home, Jennifer!

The MPI Foundation provides grants and scholarships to the MPI community and funds innovative research; distributing more than \$5.1 million to chapters and individuals over the past six years. From April to September of 2020, the Foundation distributed more than \$250,000 specifically towards distressed members. The ripple effect equates to more than 1,200 individuals in five months, said Kevin Kirby, executive director of the MPI Foundation. Thankfully, in September 2020, the IMEX Group, a longtime partner of MPI, donated an additional \$250,000 to the MPI Foundation. It is from this donation that MPISSN is able to celebrate, honor and congratulate our scholarship winner, Jennifer Mann.



Interview with Beth Wright
Sr. Director, Events & Sponsorship
California Grocers Association

When the California Grocers Association had to switch their annual conference – normally held in Palm Springs – to virtual, they had a huge challenge – How were they going to arrange 900 virtual one-on-one meetings for their suppliers and buyers? It wasn't just a company to product match they had to arrange, it was a company specific buyer to supplier sales manager match they had to arrange.

The Interview

“Beth, thanks for sharing a bit about your pivot to a virtual event last year. How did you plan for nearly 900 1:1 meetings in the virtual environment?”

BW: The platform allowed for 1:1 meetings through the platform, but only a company -to company match, so we weren't able to use their matching system. We manage each grocery retail buyer's schedule down to the individual, so CGA used our normal process to create the meetings (a manual process) and handed the meetings off to Matrix to build the meeting links.

“Did you have any open booths or lounges for people to visit during this event?”

BW: We elected not to have any of the virtual space such as exhibits or suites. We focused on the core strength of this conference - the 1:1 meetings.

“What was sponsor/supplier feedback like?”

BW: The platform created rooms for the sponsor where their representatives could get together and practice their presentation and meet post meeting for a wrap up. The sponsors really enjoyed this. They also liked being able to personalize the room with their logo and images.

“What lessons from the event would you share with other planners?”

BW:

1) Have a plan B. We had issues with company firewalls, VPN Lines and other technical issues. We **STRONGLY** encouraged everyone to log in to the platform the week prior so any challenges could be resolved. The platform had a great tech support team available to trouble shoot; however, when people logged on 5 minutes prior to their meeting and something didn't work – we went to Plan B which was to re-schedule the meetings through Microsoft Teams. This part was managed by our staff.

2) Pre-recorded speaker sessions are less risky

3) Encourage your speakers and presenters to practice and practice again

4) Encourage speakers to simplify their background. For example, a clock behind them that doesn't align with the actual presentation time can be really distracting.

5) It's hard to get people to do it – but you can't

encourage your attendees enough to **PLEASE** go to the platform ahead of time. We sent this message over and over and still had a great deal of waiting until the last moment.

6) Be sure to have extra staff ready to help trouble shoot – especially the first couple of days.

“Would you use the platform again moving forward for a virtual or hybrid event?”

BW: We are assessing this currently. We plan to be back in person at the end of September with a hybrid event. The platform worked for our 100% virtual event – but we are unsure if we would need the same platform for a hybrid event.

“In summary, what would you say looking back at your event.”

BW: Our stakeholders and members appreciated that we were able to bring the event to them during COVID19. It wasn't the same as in-person – but business got done. Suppliers were able to showcase new products. Retail buyers were able to make decisions, ask key questions and plan ahead for the upcoming season. As an essential business, grocers and the supply chain needed an opportunity to meet and our conference continued with the core mission of providing these opportunities for face-to-face meetings. In addition, our education session were really well attended. Attendees were engaged and focused on the event. We are excited to get back to in-person as much as possible. This is a people-to-people industry, but this experience proved that we could adjust when we needed to.

Background

The Stats: 889 attendees, 55 sponsors and a total of 26 speakers for 16 sessions

Days: 5 Days (normally 3 in person) – Education from 8:00 – 9:30 a.m., followed by personalized schedules of one-on-one meetings from 9:30 – 4:00 p.m.

The Platform: Matrix

AV Producer: Production Strategies (Luke Benton) For some of the pre-recorded sessions

Attendee Costs: Reduced to a flat rate – an average 45-75% below the in person cost to attend due to reduced costs without F&B etc.

Sponsor Fees: Sponsor rates were kept the same as in person. Sponsors also realized a savings on typical expenses from not being onsite such as travel, hotel, furnishing their suite.



Interview with Rachel Hickerson, CMP Meeting & Events Manager Advocacy & Management Group, INC

Rachel's client wanted to meet in person. When that wasn't possible, they budgeted for a low-attendance virtual event, but got the buy-in from volunteer committee members from their membership. The result was an overwhelming success attendance-wise and participants realized virtual collaboration and networking was possible. They even discovered a new aspect of their event that they will continue with in-person events.

The Interview

"It sounds like your recent virtual event was a great success. Can you share some details about your 850 person event?"

RH: Our program did go really well! We weren't really sure what our attendance numbers would be as this particular group really wants an in-person meeting. Given that, while researching platforms I was wanting something more low cost but still a good platform. We went with CE21 and I would highly recommend working with them for anyone looking. Their tradeshow area isn't terribly robust, but this group doesn't have exhibitors for the "sell" but more of the face-to-face support. So for us, our focus was more on the education and how to work with CEU systems. They were able to meet all our needs. Who knew we would balloon to 850, when in person we usually only get about 500? Our initial goal 350 – so we were ecstatic with the turnout.

"What do you attribute to your planning success?"

RH: I was lucky to have a great planning committee of volunteers helping me out. I couldn't have managed this all as one person. They were all in on the buy in which helped reassure members that it was going to be great. In total I had 10 people, myself included.

"Were your education sessions pre-recorded or live?"

RH: Most of the sessions were pre-recorded videos with a small handful of live production. We didn't use a production partner (no room in original budget) but our platform gave some easy to follow instructions for our speakers. They also did light editing on the finished products. Those who were live (mainly our plenary speaker) had a producer behind the

scenes provided by CE21, and a practice session ahead of time was given. All of it helped show a seamless product!

"What were your financial outcomes from the program?"

RH: The overhead for this program was tons less than in person! We are looking at making about triple than what we have in the past on this same program. This client always just wants a high-quality meeting without a money loss. The conference is not typically a budget balancer but it's also never in the red. We were able to provide that and then some!

"We noticed your drop in sponsor/exhibitor participation – can you share more?"

RH: While our attendee numbers were out of bounds, our exhibitor and sponsorship ones were WAY down. We expected this and it did not hurt our bottom line because we planned for it. We also included two of our typical high dollar sponsors into the committee process, so they had buy-in to the items were doing to enhance the exhibitor experience. While the sponsorship participation was down, they were extremely happy with the engagement level they were able to obtain in a virtual environment. Sponsors had visibility on the platform and recognition in the breakouts. We also invited companies to do a \$50 prize as a bingo sponsor. They were able to welcome, give information on their product and do the bingo card calling. We had a similar opportunity for a trivia game.

"Did you send a gift box or conference box out in advance?"

RH: We offered this to sponsors and got very little traction. We sent items as an organization just to ensure people received something fun as a reminder of the event.

"How did you encourage participants to go to the virtual lounges?"

RH: This was not difficult! Our members were yearning to engage with other members in their same skill capacity to bounce ideas off each other. In fact, this is going to become

Background

The Stats: 850+ attendees (typically 550 in person), 15 booths (typically 30 in person) and 90 science and technical speakers, two concurrent sessions, social events, CEUs.

Days: 2.5 days, Day was 2 hours. Day 2 was 9 AM to 7 PM (with a social event) and Day 3 was 9 AM - 3:30 PM

The Platform: CE21

AV Producer: No. Utilized the CE21 guidance for production and support

Attendee Costs: Our attendee rate was MUCH lower than in person, for obvious overhead reasons. With such a low overhead, we were able to slash the price to about 1/3 of our onsite offering. This definitely led to the increase in attendance. Also, districts had just about all their staff watch the live stream where in person these members wouldn't have the opportunity to attend.

Sponsor Fees: We lowered the cost to sponsor as well. Instead of doing two different rates (member vs non member) we made one rate and included the membership with it. Since this group is not looking for the sell, we knew our numbers would still be low but we were happy with the amount we did get.

a long standing idea now monthly for the association. Our lounges were split up by positions so you were talking with someone in the same position just at a different district. Our virtual lounges were not sponsored, but this is an opportunity to look at it needed in future for sure. In fact, they were a last minute thought. We were really concerned we were packing too much in the day, but we also know this group does like the engagement factor so we did the lounges. We had moderators in the lounges that had stock questions revolving around that subject matter if needed. And it wasn't! I was watching on one of my screens and it was crazy to see how popular the lounges were.

"Do you have any lessons learned that you would share – or things you'd do differently?"

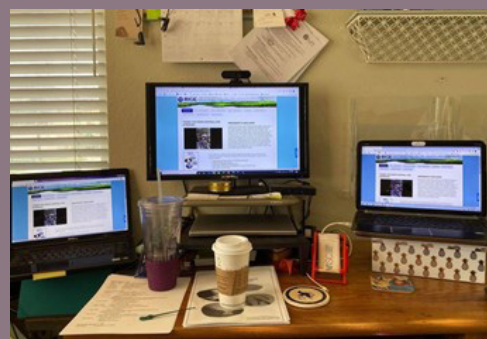
RH: Give yourself at least a full day of no programming after you send your welcome email. Ours went out on Sunday night and half of Monday was spent triaging questions etc. You definitely need that time to work those things out.

"Would you use the platform again? And would you use it for a hybrid event?"

RH: I would use CE21 again absolutely. I haven't fully wrapped my brain around a hybrid event just yet and my client does not want a hybrid event. So I'd have to look further to what that will look like once it's a piece of what we have to do.

"When do you anticipate your first in-person event will be – and will it be in California or another state?" (for this client or another?)

RH: As far as in person meetings, this client has one for January 2022 that we still are not sure about. I think the state of CA will do a very slow open and even by 2022 early, we won't have large scale gatherings no matter how much we can assure safety. For anything small or mid-level, I think that will start in the fall. Other states have remained open on a small basis with meetings, so I think if anyone has meetings outside of CA, I think they will have a quicker roll out to large scale, safe meetings.



MPISN wants to thank both Beth and Rachel for their insights "Behind the Screen" of their virtual events! We know there is a lot of "experience and wisdom" among our membership as we've all worked to provide our companies and clients with events that bring them together. If you wish to submit an article about your virtual, hybrid or other meeting planning experience – we would love to share in our next issue of Connects. Please email your article or idea to Amy Orr, CMP – VP Communications at amy@orrorganizedevents.com

YOUR DEDICATED PARTNER
FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS TODAY
& HYBRID EVENTS TOMORROW

 **ZENEVENT**
SEAMLESS VIRTUAL PRODUCTIONS

BY **innovia**
Genuine People. Dynamic Experiences.

Visit zenevent.com to
schedule a virtual platform
demo or innoviapro.com
to learn more about our
White Glove service

469.291.7379



Thank you Key Partner Sponsors

Diamond Key Partner

Available!

Contact Jessica Counts | Director Strategic Alliance | jessica@calodging.com

Emerald Key Partners



Ruby Key Partners



Sapphire Key Partners



Media Partners

Available!

Contact Jessica Counts | Director Strategic Alliance | jessica@calodging.com

In-Kind Partners



MPISSN Advertising & Sponsorship Commitment Form

Please complete the below information indicating your MPISSN advertising and/or sponsorship participation choices. Please make sure all fields are complete before submitting. All advertising specifications are stated in the description of the advertising option on page 6

KEY PARTNER SPONSORSHIPS: ☐ Diamond- \$3,500 ☐ Emerald - \$2,500 ☐ Ruby - \$1,500 ☐ Sapphire - \$500

MEETING SPONSORSHIPS: ☐ Sept. Workshop & Luncheon - \$3000 ☐ Nov. Workshop & Luncheon - \$2000

☐ Feb. Education Luncheon & Boot Camp - \$3000. ☐ April Workshop & Luncheon-\$3000

DIGITAL ADVERTISING:

☐ Full Page Newsletter Ad - \$300 ☐ Half Page Newsletter Ad - \$200.

☐ Facebook Ad - \$175 (per month) # of months ____

☐ Website Banner Ad - \$175/month*#of months____ ☐ Email Banner Ad - \$175/month*# of months ____

Company Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Contact for Logo or Art: _____

Website Address or Link for Ad: _____

Ad Run Month(s) or Newsletter/Issue: _____

Payment Information:

Amount of Purchase: \$ _____ Discount (If Applicable*): \$ _____ Total \$ _____

☐ Enclosed Check # _____ ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ AMEX ☐ Please Send Invoice

Card Number: _____ Expires: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____

Billing Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return this completed form to: Christina Bauders, Executive Director, MPISSN
1800 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95811 • Email: exec@mpissn.org
Questions? Call Sulema H. Peterson at (916) 316-7632 or Christina Bauders at (916) 441-3039

Please allow 5 business days for ads and logos to be uploaded to the website. These rates are effective **June 1, 2019** and may be changed at any time by the publisher. Advertisers and advertising agencies assume liability for all content, including text, representation and illustrations of advertisements printed, and also assume responsibility for any claims arising therefore made against the publisher. The publisher reserves the right to reject any advertising, which is not in keeping with the publication's standards. Advertisers and advertising agencies agree to indemnify and protect the publisher from any damage or expense resulting from printing and publishing any advertisement. All payments must be received 15 days prior to start of ad run. Unpaid invoices will incur a charge of 5% per month.