

THE MPISCC NEWSLETTER

# Scoop.

OCT / 25

## Save the Dates

Staying connected to our community  
isn't just something we do —  
it's how we learn, grow, and lead.  
Every MPI Southern California gathering  
is created with intention:  
to inspire connection, spark conversation,  
and open doors to new opportunities.  
Save these dates and make plans to join us:

November 21, 2025

Pura Vida: A Latin Night of Celebration  
JW Marriott Anaheim

January 29, 2026

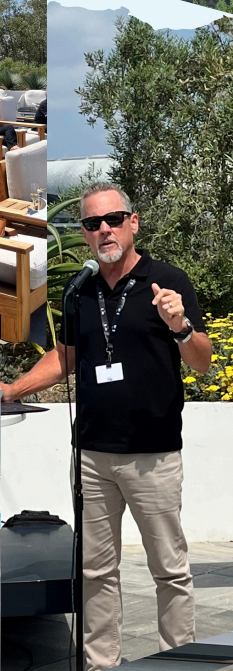
State of the Industry  
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May 6–8, 2026

[WE]Con  
Langham Pasadena



# ROADSHOW 2025 WAS A HIT!





# BE AN MPI: MEETING PROFESSIONAL INFLUENCER SERIES

## Maribel Denner

Director Of Sales Marketing at JW Marriott, Anaheim Resort



An MPI member since 1996, Maribel knows it's not enough to join—you have to show up. "You get what you put in," she says, reflecting on her journey from new member to Chapter President in 2003–04. Her proudest moment? Helping MPISCC win Chapter of the Year. For her, leadership is about transparency and action. "A real leader doesn't just ask—they lead by example." She believes MPI thrives on connection: "It starts with showing up and can lead anywhere." She's passionate about women's empowerment, karaoke, and spending time with her seven grandchildren. Her go-to anthem? "This Girl is on Fire."

## Troy Peters

Chief Experience Officer, SEAS Productions

A 15-year MPI member, Troy joined early in his career as a Washington-based association planner and quickly learned that real value comes from getting involved. "I jumped in on the marketing committee—that's where the magic happens." His favorite MPI memories? Board retreats that built leadership skills and lifelong friendships. "Leadership is about organizing people and stepping up. Serving on a board helped me grow—and show that growth at work." Outside the industry, he's a classic French cooking enthusiast and loves exploring with his 11-year-old twins. His go-to anthem? Shake It Off. One word for MPI? Tight. "It's a true community."



## Patty Kindness

Director of Sales and Marketing, Allied PRA



After relocating from Las Vegas to San Clemente, Patty joined MPI mid-pandemic to build community—and never looked back. "I showed up to one event, volunteered right after, and kept going." From mentee to Speaker Committee Chair for WECon (and now incoming Director of Education, she's grown into a leadership role that blends her love of content and connection. "This industry thrives when we lift each other up." Patty's passions? Global adventures, mom life, and yes—she went to high school with Kobe Bryant. One word for MPI? Connected.



# CREATING INCLUSIVE EVENTS: HOW PLANNERS, VENUES, AND VENDORS CAN SUPPORT ATTENDEES WITH DISABILITIES

October is Disability Awareness Month, a time to recognize the importance of accessibility, inclusivity, and equity in all spaces — including conferences, trade shows, festivals, and other events. For event professionals, this is more than a compliance checkbox; it's about creating an environment where every attendee can fully participate and engage.

According to the World Health Organization, over 1.3 billion people worldwide experience significant disability. These attendees are your potential clients, guests, and advocates. Prioritizing accessibility isn't just the right thing to do — it's good business. It:

- Increases attendance and participation
- Enhances brand reputation
- Meets legal requirements (such as ADA compliance in the U.S.)
- Fosters loyalty and trust within your audience

Accessibility is also one of the key pillars of the Event Sustainability Certification framework. Additional information can be found on the Events Council website at <https://eventscouncil.org/Sustainability/CSE>. This certification recognizes that inclusivity and equal access are just as important as environmental and economic sustainability. Incorporating accessibility best practices into your event planning not only improves attendee experience but also demonstrates your commitment to global standards and responsible event management.

## Practical Steps for Event Planners

### 1. Start Accessibility Planning Early

Accessibility should be considered from the very first stages of event design. Include it in RFPs, budgets, and site selection checklists. Ask potential venues about their ADA compliance, accessible entrances, restrooms, and assistive services. Also consider availability of Family and Gender-Neutral restrooms to accommodate caregivers assisting someone of a different gender, and to ensure inclusivity for LGBTQ+ attendees.





# CREATING INCLUSIVE EVENTS: CONTINUED

## 2. Communicate Accessibility Early

Include an “Accessibility Information” section on your website and registration form with details on:

- Wheelchair routes and accessible entrances
- Sign language or captioning options
- Assistive listening devices
- Quiet or sensory-friendly spaces
- Service-animal relief areas

Invite attendees to share accommodation needs during registration so you can plan in advance.

## 3. Train Staff and Volunteers

Provide basic disability etiquette training—how to offer help respectfully, communicate with people who have hearing, speech, or vision differences, and direct guests to accessible restrooms, entrances, and quiet spaces.

## 4. Think Beyond Mobility

Accessibility spans far more than ramps:

- Hearing: Offer captioning and interpreters not just in sessions but during networking and meals.
- Vision: Use large-print or braille materials and high-contrast signage.
- Neurodiversity: Create calm zones and avoid overwhelming visuals or sound.
- Lodging: Partner with hotels for ADA rooms and barrier-free routes.
- Technology: Provide printed materials for those not using apps or QR codes.
- Presentations: Share outlines or summaries; verified AI notes can help non-native speakers or those with hearing differences.

## How Venues Can Support

- Invest in Accessibility: Ensure barrier-free movement in rooms, stages, restrooms, and dining areas. Add hearing loops, adjustable podiums, and flexible seating.
- Improve Lighting & Sound: Bright, even lighting and sound-dampened spaces benefit guests with low vision or hearing loss.
- Simplify Wayfinding: Use clear, high-contrast signage with braille and accessible maps.

## How Vendors Can Help

- Caterers: Label food and keep serving stations within reach.
- AV Teams: Provide captioning and accessible video.
- Transportation: Offer wheelchair-accessible shuttles with clearly marked pickup zones.

## Building a Culture of Inclusion

Accessibility is a mindset. When planners, venues, and vendors collaborate, every guest feels valued and included. Embedding accessibility into sustainability goals turns inclusion into a standard, not a special feature.

**Pro Tip: Accessibility evolves. Gather post-event feedback to refine and improve every time.**



# EVENT ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

## Quick Reference for Event Planners, Venues, and Vendors

### Before the Event

- Include accessibility requirements in RFPs and contracts
- Select an ADA-compliant venue with accessible entrances, restrooms, and seating
- Provide an Accessibility Information section on your event website and marketing materials
- Offer accommodation request options during registration
- Ensure clear, high-contrast, and large-print signage in key areas
- Prepare accessible digital materials (screen-reader friendly, captioned videos)

### Staff & Volunteer Preparation

- Train team on disability etiquette and respectful assistance
- Assign accessibility point-of-contact at the event
- Familiarize staff with accessible entrances, restrooms, and quiet spaces

### Venue & Layout

- Ensure barrier-free access to all rooms and stages
- Arrange flexible seating to accommodate wheelchairs, service animals, and companions
- Place food & beverage stations at accessible heights
- Provide wheelchair-accessible transportation and drop-off points

### Communication & Program

- Offer live captioning or CART services
- Provide sign language interpreters for main sessions
- Make printed programs available in large print and/or braille
- Ensure all audio-visual presentations have captions and verbal descriptions

### During the Event

- Keep aisles clear and wide enough for mobility devices
- Clearly mark accessible routes and facilities
- Offer quiet or sensory-friendly spaces
- Check in with attendees who requested accommodations to confirm needs are met

**Pro Tip: Accessibility is ongoing — gather post-event feedback to improve future events.**

**Accessibility & Event Sustainability: Accessibility is a core pillar of event sustainability certification. Learn more from the Events Industry Council: <https://eventscouncil.org/Sustainability/CSE>**





# the feel good files

FOR THE HUMANS  
BEHIND THE HUSTLE

## *Mindful Leadership – Supporting Your Team's Wellness*

In the world of events, we're wired for movement. Deadlines, client calls, quick pivots, and long days on our feet — it's part of the job. But leadership in this industry isn't only about logistics and delivering perfect programs. It's also about creating space for people — including ourselves — to thrive. Today's most effective leaders are those who model mindful leadership: leading with awareness, empathy, and intention to foster a culture of wellness within their teams.

Wellness in a team doesn't happen by accident. It begins with leaders who recognize that productivity and well-being aren't opposites; they're partners. When planners are always in "go mode" and running at full speed, burnout and turnover follow. But when leaders make balance, mental health, and open communication part of the culture, everything starts to shift. Teams become more engaged, creative, and resilient, especially during high-stress event cycles.

Wellness initiatives only work if leadership sets the tone. Take time to model the behaviors you want to see; small, consistent choices can change the tone of an entire team:

- **Pause before reacting.** Demonstrate mindfulness in meetings and onsite situations by taking a breath before responding to challenges.
- **Respect boundaries.** Avoid sending late-night messages unless it's urgent. Show that it's okay to unplug after hours.
- **Normalize breaks.** Encouraging your team to step away during long event days, even five minutes to stretch or hydrate makes a difference.

Creating a culture of wellness also means building trust — a space where people feel heard and valued. Check-ins shouldn't just be about timelines or task lists. Make wellness a regular part of your check-ins: ask how your team is managing, not just what's on their to-do list. When individuals feel safe to express stress or ask for support, they're more likely to stay motivated and loyal. That small shift opens doors and helps people feel supported and safe to speak up when they need help.

And wellness doesn't have to be a big initiative or a special program. It can be woven into your workflow:

- **Begin meetings with a quick reflection** or a moment of gratitude.
- **Rotate responsibilities** so workloads stay balanced and learning is shared.
- **Offer mental health resources**, such as access to wellness webinars or EAP programs.
- **Celebrate milestones**, not just the final show-stopping moment, to acknowledge effort and team work

When leaders prioritize wellness, it ripples outward. Teams that feel supported show up stronger for clients, produce higher-quality work, and build a more sustainable event culture. Mindful leadership is about being present, intentional, and human in how you lead. When leaders show up with empathy and awareness, the impact reaches far beyond the team. Clients notice it. Partners feel it. The work reflects it. And in an industry built on connection, that might just be the most powerful skill we have.



# ALL THAT'S NEW & FABULOUS IN LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas continues to reinvent itself as the ultimate destination for meetings, events, and entertainment — and the latest updates from the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) prove that there's always something new to discover.

## **Plan for Fabulous: A New Campaign Inspiring What's Next**

In September, Las Vegas debuted the latest brand campaign Welcome to Fabulous and invites meeting planners and professionals to Plan for Fabulous. Building on Las Vegas' unmatched energy and creativity, the campaign showcases how the destination transforms events into experiences blending world-class venues, inspiring hospitality, and a dose of only-in-Vegas magic.

## **F1 Arcade Debuts at The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace**

Adding to the excitement, F1 Arcade Las Vegas is now open at The Forum Shops at Caesars Forum. The flagship location of this thrilling social gaming concept brings the high-octane world of Formula 1 to life with full-motion racing simulators, curated cocktails, and private event space, perfect for team outings or receptions that shift into high gear.

## **Culinary Renaissance at The Venetian Resort**

The Venetian is in the midst of a remarkable transformation, unveiling a collection of new world-class restaurants from celebrated chefs. From Cote by Simon Kim, Bazaar Meat by José Andrés, and Southern California favorite Gjelina, the resort continues to redefine the dining scene with elevated flavors and design-forward spaces ideal for group dining.

Whether you're planning your next meeting, incentive trip, or culinary-inspired experience, Las Vegas stands ready to deliver something truly fabulous every time.

For more on what's new in Las Vegas, visit [www.vegasmeansbusiness.com](http://www.vegasmeansbusiness.com).



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# HOLIDAY EVENT PLANNING HACKS FOR STRESS-FREE SUCCESS

**Holiday season: when everyone wants “festive” and you’re running on caffeine, adrenaline, and a spreadsheet that’s one formula away from mutiny. Here’s how to keep your cool, your clients impressed, and your sanity intact.**

## **1. Move the Party, Keep the Magic**

Stop fighting for a date in December. Host it in January, call it a New Year Kickoff, and let everyone show up tan, rested, and over their holiday hangovers. Venues are cheaper. Parking’s easier. Spirits are higher.

## **2. Ditch the Ballroom, Keep the Wow**

That same beige banquet hall? No thanks. Try a museum, brewery, or your client’s own HQ reimaged with lighting, greenery, and lounge zones. Nothing says “fresh start” like a space no one recognizes at first glance.

## **3. Feed the Story, Not the Guests**

Yes, people need to eat—but make it fun. Think chef cameos, live stations, or unexpected details (mini s’mores boxes, custom spice rub favors, espresso martini carts). It’s about moments, not menus.

## **4. Shorter Shows, Bigger Impact**

Cut the speeches. Nobody wants to relive Q3. Open with energy, thank who you must, and drop a surprise mid-event—a musical act, donation reveal, or confetti moment that earns its applause.

## **5. Comfort Is the New Luxury**

Accessibility, good lighting, and real seating matter more than themed centerpieces. Create quiet corners and add signage that actually helps. Happy, comfortable guests stay longer (and remember it).

## **6. Spend Where the Camera Points**

No one photographs your table linens. They do photograph your step-and-repeat, entertainment, and that one striking design feature. Put the budget where the lens lands.

## **7. Tease, Don’t Tell**

The best invites hint, not scream. Drop one mysterious detail—“something unexpected after dessert”—and let curiosity do the marketing.

## **8. Keep the Glow Going**

Send a quick “thank you” with event photos the next day. Post a recap reel. Wrap it up with class and warmth. People remember how you end things.

**The takeaway: The calmest planners aren’t lucky—they’re strategic. They build margin for magic, laugh when the AV glitches, and always have a Plan B(etter).**



# EXPANDING HORIZONS: EXPOCCI BRINGS COAST-TO-COAST SUPPORT WITH NEW CALIFORNIA FACILITY



Expo Convention Contractors (ExpoCCI) has always believed that events are more than exhibits — they're experiences that connect people, brands, and ideas. With over 30 years of expertise, ExpoCCI continues to evolve to meet client needs across the Americas. The company's latest milestone is the launch of a 40,000 square foot facility in Placentia, California, expanding its West Coast presence and further strengthening its nationwide capabilities.

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## Why the West Coast Matters

California is home to some of the world's most dynamic conventions, exhibitions, and corporate events. Establishing a West Coast facility allows ExpoCCI to deliver faster, more efficient logistics across the region, deepen collaboration with major venues throughout the state, and extend the same end-to-end event solutions that have made us a trusted partner from Miami to Medellín. This move isn't just about geography — it's about delivering greater value where our clients need it most.



## A Facility Built for Innovation

ExpoCCI's new Southern California facility is more than just a warehouse — it's a fully equipped operations hub designed to support events of every scale. From custom exhibit design and fabrication to advanced graphics production, exhibitor service support, and seamless warehousing, every element is built for efficiency and impact. The space also features cutting-edge immersive solutions, including LED staging and interactive environments that elevate the attendee experience. By blending creativity with operational excellence, this new hub strengthens ExpoCCI's mission to help organizations bring their brands to life in bold, unforgettable ways. Serving Clients Across the Americas

From Miami, Orlando, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and Medellín, ExpoCCI now connects clients to coast-to-coast expertise. This expansion reflects the company's vision: "Large enough to be exceptional, yet small enough to be personable."

"Our new West Coast facility allows us to better serve clients and venues across California while expanding our nationwide reach," shared Sanjay Ahuja, National Sales Manager. With this expansion, the company continues to elevate experiences, ensuring every event — no matter the size or location — is executed with creativity, innovation, and care.



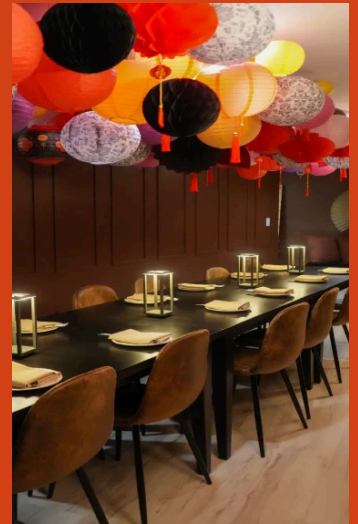
# LOCAL LA VENUE SPOTLIGHT: MEN & BEASTS



On the Sunset-Alvarado corner in Echo Park, Men & Beasts serves Chinese flavors reimagined through a plant-based lens. Everything's made in-house, from vegan proteins and doughs to dim sum. Highlights include zhajiangmian with fried bean sauce, kung pao tofu, smashed cucumber, spicy tofu, shiitake pan-fried dumplings, seitan salt-and-pepper "wings," baby carrots with black sesame and mint, and an LA-inspired elote puff with taro, corn, cashew, cilantro, and lime.

One of the few spots in LA offering a Gong Fu tea ceremony, Men & Beasts partners with Arcadia's Yoshantea for Taiwanese-style service (\$24 per person; or \$20 for a pot of jade green oolong, jasmine, and more). Drinks also spotlight locals: Angeleno Wine Co., Friendly Noise, and Brewyard Beer Company, plus Fine Feathers kombucha and cold-brew oolong.

The refreshed space features exposed brick, a 48-seat dining room, a serene tea-room lounge for 24, and a private dining area—a natural fit for MPI mixers, tastings, or intimate buyouts that want plant-based cooking with real Los Angeles character.



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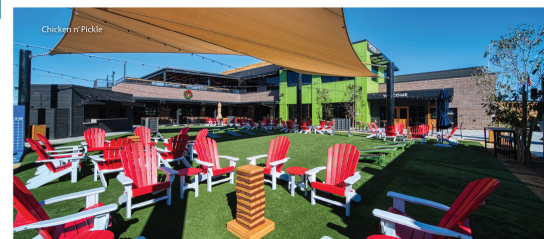
Green Valley Ranch Resort



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Scenic Views



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# CELEBRATING MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Suzanne Grange | 40 years  
 Maribel Denner | 30 years  
 Deanne Figueras | 25 years  
 Lucy Roberts | 25 years  
 Deanna Donnini | 20 years  
 Marilyn Atchue-Zuill | 10 years  
 Lana Farfan | 10 years  
 Maureen Sloan | 10 years

## and Celebrating 1 Year

Lilian Chan	Lara Gertzen
Emilio Chavez	Theresa Huber Gonzalez
Jeremiah Creus	Tom LeClair
Jennifer Dotson	Heather Matusiak
Marielen Galsim	Bora Youn
Amber Gemoto	

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Suzanne Covington  
 Cheryl Anker  
 Shelly Brown  
 Michelle Devine  
 Cristina Gallant  
 Kevin Kahn  
 Mimi Lo  
 Shadi Malhas  
 Cameron Middleton  
 Katie Paul  
 Charlotte Pearson  
 Felipe Pizarro  
 Maya Riley  
 Erik Seversen  
 Leslie Ann Siy  
 Jaclyn Sobel  
 Rosemary Vera  
 Nicole Verhagen

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## THE NEXT GEN SHIFT: DESIGNING EXPERIENCES FOR A WORKFORCE THAT VALUES MEANING OVER MINGLING

Walk into a networking reception today and you can sense it right away. The energy has changed. The newest generation of professionals isn't chasing handshakes or collecting business cards. They're looking for experiences that feel purposeful, communities that feel genuine, and opportunities to connect in ways that actually matter.

For those of us who've spent our careers bringing people together, this evolution is both exciting and humbling. The next wave of professionals has grown up in a world defined by access, collaboration, and transparency. Authenticity matters more than formality. They're less motivated by hierarchy and more by shared purpose. They want to take part, not just take notes — and they expect individuality and interaction to be built into every experience.

We can already see this mindset at work in events like SXSW, where attendees move fluidly between sessions, installations, and community spaces, creating their own learning paths along the way. The draw isn't only what happens on stage, but what unfolds between sessions — the spontaneous conversations, creative exchanges, and moments of shared discovery that feel personal and unscripted.

That same expectation is reshaping how people engage at conferences, meetings, and corporate events everywhere. Attendees want more than content; they want connection. They value dialogue over presentation, collaboration over performance. Networking now happens through shared experiences — a wellness break, a small discussion circle, a collaborative workshop where people can speak openly and learn together.

For event professionals, this shift calls for a different approach to engagement. It's no longer about attendance or applause. It's about designing experiences that make people feel part of something real. That might mean shorter keynotes followed by interactive dialogue, breakout zones for informal exchange, or programming that gives attendees agency in shaping the conversation.

As we design for the next generation, it's worth asking: what does connection look like in a world that values community over hierarchy?

The answer may not come from the newest app or production trend, but from how we listen — how we create space for authenticity, curiosity, and belonging. The next generation isn't just showing up to network. They're showing up to connect with purpose. And that's the invitation for all of us.

Margaret Launzel-Pennes