Meetings & Events

California’s Beautiful Seaside Escape: Ventura County West

In the heart of California’s Central Coast, Ventura County West breathes life into any corporate retreat, with pristine beaches, charming coastal cities, flourishing farms, orchards and vineyards. Home to Camarillo, Oxnard, Ventura and Port Hueneme, the seaside haven offers more than 200,000 square feet of conference space and 5,000 guest rooms in over 60 hotels and inns.

With value-minded, state-of-the-art facilities near waterfronts, golf courses, wineries, quaint Old Towns and bustling Main Streets, this ideal destination can accommodate anywhere from 10 to 10,000 guests.

“What makes our communities special is their small-town charm and exceptional hospitality,” explained Rebekah Evans, Executive Director of the Ventura County Lodging Association (VCLA). “It truly is a breath of fresh air for organizations and groups that need to get away.”

Meet and Stay

The Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach has 19,000 square feet of event space directly on the shores of the Santa Barbara Channel. Groups can book their event inside the newly-renovated Top of the Harbor ballroom, where guests are treated to 360-degree panoramic shoreline views.

The Wyndham Garden Ventura Pierpont Inn exudes whimsical charm with lush landscaping and craftsman-style architecture. The property features two 1925 English Tudor revival cottages and a 1935 Spanish Revival Banquet Center that sits atop a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

The Residence Inn by Marriott at River Ridge in Oxnard, adjacent to River Ridge Golf Course, is the perfect balance of work and play, with two pools, three spas, four lighted tennis courts, and outdoor patio with a fire pit.

Convenient to local attractions, Hampton Inn & Suites Camarillo is the closest hotel to the Camarillo Premium Outlets, one of California’s hottest shopping destinations. The Holiday Inn Express Port Hueneme, steps from the gorgeous beaches, is a no-brainer for groups seeking uninterrupted rest and relaxation.

Farm to Table Dining

Located along an agricultural green-belt,

Continued on page 37
As part of its commitment to furthering the success of the meeting and event industry, the Meeting Professionals International (MPI) Foundation has concluded its research study on Strategic Meetings Management (SMM).

The goal of the research initiative was to gain a deeper understanding of SMM as a disciplined approach to managing enterprise-wide meeting and event activities, processes, suppliers and data. Specifically, the researchers evaluated how SMM has evolved as well as the implications and opportunities for future applications.

"SMM has been a hard concept to define. While there are many best practices, SMM varies from organization to organization," said Cindy D’Aoust, chief operating officer for MPI. "With this research, we are looking to broaden the scope of SMM and position it as a framework for optimizing meetings across enterprises."

The SMM concept was first introduced more than a decade ago as businesses strove to manage costs and mitigate risk. That need grew throughout the recent recession a few years ago. However, as SMM programs matured, businesses found that they also proved useful in designing events that meet organization-wide goals and for improving the delegate and stakeholder experience.

Following are highlights from the study published in the "Strategic Meetings Management (SMM): Taxonomy, Growth and Future" report:

- **ROI is both financial and emotional.** Successful SMM can engage attendees before, during and after the meeting is over.
- **Measurements must not be based solely on ROI but on ROO as well—return on objectives—and ROO metrics needs to be developed for the industry.**
- **Stakeholder support from all levels of an organization is critical for SMM success.**
- **SMM is not "one size fits all."** It must be aligned to fit each company’s business goals, objectives and corporate culture.
- **Creating and nurturing business partnerships is an increasingly important aspect to SMM in helping to reduce risk, garner better service and improve negotiating power.**

The study was commissioned by the MPI Foundation and conducted by the International Center for Research Events, Tourism and Hospitality (ICRETH) at Leeds Metropolitan University. SMM subject experts from Your Corporate Source and Bondurant Consulting were collaborating partners.

Phase I of the research project involved collating and categorizing published SMM documents, surveys with meeting professionals, participation in educational sessions and interviews with subject matter experts between October 2012 and June 2013. Phase II will continue through 2014 and includes utilizing the findings to create professional development tools and recommendations for the future. Tools include case studies, video guides, white papers and research reports for practitioners at all levels.

According to Dr. Eliza Hixson from ICRETH, who conducted several of the interviews from the study, "Many larger organisations within the U.S. are moving towards mature SMM Programs (SMMPs), and we can see benefits expanding from simply cost consolidation to one more focused on the participant experience. We are seeing recognition of the value SMM can bring to event activities and long-term business goals."

To access the research report and additional SMM resources, visit www.mpiweb.org/smm.

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**MEETINGS & EVENTS**

The Implications and Opportunities of Strategic Meetings Management

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**What it takes to get ahead.**

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**Strategic Meetings Management has been a hard concept to define. While there are many best practices, SMM varies from organization to organization. With this research, we are looking to broaden the scope of SMM and position it as a framework for optimizing meetings across enterprises.**

CINDY D’AOUST, MPI
Preparing an Exhibit for a Trade Show

your company will shine on the expo floor. and explore the stylistic and logistical stellar booth, reserve a prime booth space, developed. With more time to execute a time for trouble-shooting and fine tuning months before the show. This allows ample exhibits have been planned out for 8-12 months of planning, many of the best up for show day. While a successful and many businesses.

By LISA BERTAINA and LAURIE PENNACCHI

W e’ve all been there. An impor-
tant industry trade show is coming up and you want to lift your organization’s presence to the next level...but you’re more than a little con-cerned that you’ll end up falling into the trap of doing the same old thing. Or maybe it’s your “first rodeo” and you’re not sure about how to plan most effective-ly so that your company will stand out. Based on our decades of experience helping companies draw attention to themselves and their exhibits at trade shows, conventions and events, below are five of the most important questions you can ask yourself and your colleagues before the big event, arranged in the order you should ask them!

Before the Show

1. How far in advance should I plan for my trade show?
The earlier you begin planning for your show, the better. Remember, there is a long list of deadlines and obligations to follow before a show, as well as options to consid-er, vendors to contact, and services to set up for show day. While a successful and eye-catching exhibit is achievable with 3 months of planning, many of the best exhibits have been planned out for 8-12 months before the show. This allows ample time for trouble-shooting and fine tuning well after your exhibit concept has been developed. With more time to execute a stellar booth, reserve a prime booth space, and explore the stylistic and logistical options available to you, come show time, your company will shine on the expo floor.

2. Does it make sense for my company to consider renting, instead of buying, a booth?
Organizations looking to be mindful of their budget but still want a top quali-ty exhibit should look into the rental option. Renting a booth offers the power of flexibility to a business, without break-ing the bank like a purchased booth can. With endless customization options available, trade show display rentals can absolutely feel and appear like a pur-chase, without the cost of ownership (storage, maintenance, etc). Instead of having to maintain the presence of your booth show after show, you can rely on a rental to represent your company like a brand new booth every time you use it. Purchased booths can be a good invest-ment too, but often become obsolete for most companies after a couple uses, and selling a booth (or booth components) can come with a disappointing return. Renting makes a great deal of sense for many businesses.

3. What are some “hidden costs” that I should be aware of before exhibiting?
Exhibitors are often caught off guard by hidden show fees that sometimes seem to appear out of thin air. These fees are non-negotiable and are often regard-ed as “uprostered” costs that can be easily identified by veteran exhibitors. For the rookies, though, hidden costs that go unaccounted for can easily add unexpect-ed dollars to a budget and leave the exhibitor feeling discouraged as a whole. When creating your budget, keep these fees in mind (and remember to plan for a buffer to allow for fluctuation):

- Labor – hourly pay begins when the labor crew arrives, not when the crew begins working on the booth. Schedule labor carefully, and account for both set-up and dismantle hours.
- Shipping – As with all packages, shipping costs fluctuate based on size and weight. Consolidate shipments as effec-tively as possible.
- Drayage – Also known as material handling, or the money you will have to pay to have your booth moved from one side of a show floor to the other. Drayage is non-negotiable and is calculated based on weight, packing methods, and num-ber of shipments (another good reason to consolidate your materials).

At the Show

4. What types of booth designs attract the greatest traffic?
Many exhibitors believe that “bigger” automatically means “better.” That is sim-ply not true. While a larger or taller booth is typically more visible from across the floor, the design of a booth ultimately holds much greater importance. Your exhibit leaves an impression on every attendee that visits it, and a poorly designed booth is sure to be remembered (as is a remarkably designed one).

When designing, focus less on the size, and more on the layout. Do your colors represent your branding accu-rately? If so, are those colors welcoming? What about the booth itself – is the atmosphere one that encourages visitors while maintaining consistency with your company’s brand and mis-sion? What about the overall aesthet-ics? Symmetry and warm lighting are examples of aesthetically pleasing ele-ments that have been proven to draw people towards exhibits. Remember, the more time you allow for planning, the more design options are available to choose from.

After the Show

3. I finished my trade show...now what?
It’s important to remember that there is still work to be done even after a show has ended. According to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR.org), a whopping 79% of leads are not contacted after the show. Failure to plan properly often translates into a loss of leads, and loss of leads equates to loss of the investment put into exhibiting. Before attending a show, devise a post-show plan with your company’s sales team on fostering the leads obtained at the show while they are still fresh.

Whether you are a trade show first-timer or an experienced exhibitor, asking these questions well in advance of the event will help to make your show signific-antly more successful.

Lisa Bertaina and Laurie Pennacchi are co-owners of ExpoMarketing. Established in 1991, ExpoMarketing focuses on the overall experience of its clients’ trade show presence, encouraging innovative and personal charm to shine on the show floor. For more information, visit www.ExpoMarketing.com.
San Fernando Valley Business Journal’s 2016
Book of Lists

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Communicating to a Group — Making Your Presentation Memorable

By BOB GREENFIELD

W e’ve all listened to presenta- tions, some good, some great, some flat. Some of these great ones are truly memorable. As more and more of us are required by our jobs to give formal presentations, this is an increasingly important topic and a truly essential skill set. Every presentation is an amazing and inevitable opportunity to set yourself apart from the crowd. So, how do you ensure that you are memo- rable for the right reasons?

There are plenty of books about formal communication and presentations addressing proper structure, format, and providing a host of novel techniques. I’d like to focus on three simple things that any presenter can do to more effectively connect with an audience: make your point, fall in love, keep it personal.

1. Make your point.

Unless your purpose is purely enter- taining, you’re there to make a point (or perhaps more than one) and to ask for something. You need to be exception- ally clear about both. Surprisingly, unskilled presenters often neglect to actu- ally make their point once they get to talking. So, what is your point? What’s the one thing that must be communicat- ed? What’s the one thing you want your audience to believe you; start with that. If you do not like your presentation, what do you think the chances are that your audience will differ with you? Is it not principally the content or what you say that engages the audience. With a live presentation, whether in front of 500 people or just 5, the main attraction is always the presen- ter. That’s right – you! Before the audience can buy into your message, it must first buy into the messenger. If your audience cannot easily buy into you, your message has no chance. To be compelling, you have to believe in your message. Unfortunately, if you are not sold on or excited about your presentation, that will come across much more clearly than your like.

It doesn’t matter how ordinary or dry you think your topic is. You owe your audience your best effort. Audiences are truly inter- esting. Tell stories of horrendous failures or awe-inspiring successes. Offer new insights about a familiar idea. Discuss an overlooked quality of something easily taken for granted. Give a demonstration. Your local bookstore has a shelf of books full of tips and techniques for incorporat- ing “sizzle” into your presentation. You want your audience to believe you; start by making sure you can believe yourself. The best way to do this is to turn your presentation into something you can’t wait to deliver. If you want it to be fun or exciting for your audience to hear, make it fun or exciting for you to deliver.

2. Fall in love with your presentation.

Does your presentation turn you off? If not, change it, quickly, before you get anywhere near your audience. If you do like your presentation, what do you think the chances are that your audience will differ with you? Is it not principally the content or what you say that engages the audience. With a live presentation, whether in front of 500 people or just 5, the main attraction is always the presen- ter. That’s right – you! Before the audience can buy into your message, it must first buy into the messenger. If your audience cannot easily buy into you, your message has no chance. To be compelling, you have to believe in your message. Unfortunately, if you are not sold on or excited about your presentation, that will come across much more clearly than your like.

There is a portion of stage fright or pre- presentation anxiety that comes from an irrational fear that your audience won’t like you or your message. If you’re feeling some of this, welcome to the human race. There is also the very rational and quite predictable anxiety that your audience won’t like your presentation because it’s a dog. If you’re feeling some of this, get back to work. You should be feeling uncomfort- able because you are about to break the cardinal rule for presenters...never waste your audience’s time.


As a presenter, you cannot hide, nor should you. This doesn’t stop many of us from trying. Again, a great presentation is not just about information. Otherwise you could just hand out copies of your well-written presentation and be done with it. Reading aloud a written report is the epitome of impersonal. A presenta- tion is supposed to be personal, and your audience doesn’t want to watch a perfect- ly programmed robot deliver a presenta- tion utterly devoid of personality. So put your personality on full display. Any person- ality at all is more interesting than written or monotonously spoken words, and it certainly beats staring at your PowerPoint slides. Subscribing to and truly embracing this may not be easy, but it’s worth remembering and working at. Believing that you deserve your audience’s attention and that it will want to see your personality is mostly about self- acceptance and confidence. Some thoughtful preparation and consideration of what is appropriate to your audience, topic, and setting will also help.

Clearly making your point, loving your presentation, and being yourself will improve your presentation and make you more memorable. Here are three final tips that any presenter can apply:

1. Be imaginative, think outside of the proverbial box, and bring your unique spin or touch to the presentation.

2. Be prepared; audiences are just as uncomfortable as the presenter when he’s bombing. Rehearse and refine your pres- entation until you have it nailed. Rehearse your presentation out loud. Reviewing your presentation is not rehearsing it. Regardless of what you have typed or written out, you’re not going to know what’s going to come out of your mouth until you hear yourself say it.

3. Be selfish. Again, make it interesting for yourself. If it’s not interesting to say, it’s probably not going to be interesting to hear.

Bob Greenfield is an organization develop- ment consultant, and is owner and principle consultant of Greenfield Management Strategies (GMS). Established in 1999, GMS helps individuals and groups in the private, non profit, and public sectors become more effective at creating the results they want. Bob can be contacted directly at (818) 506- 7125 or via his website at www.greenfieldmanagementstrategies.com.

New Whitepaper Unveils Best Practices for Increasing Efficiencies with eRFPs

T his summer, the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Meetings Committee and the Convention Industry Council (CIC) APEX Workgroup (APEX) released a new joint whitepaper, “Improving eRFP Efficiency and Effectiveness for the Meetings Industry.”

The whitepaper combines findings from complementary research conducted by the two groups in 2014 examining eRFP use, drivers and effects to provide recommendations for improving the eRFP process. GBTA conducted an online survey of 412 buyers, suppliers and third-party agencies in March of 2014 that looked at the impact of eRFPs on buyers, third parties and suppliers. CIC’s research included 20 interviews with individuals representing a cross-section of planners who source locations for events and was conducted by the Business Group and Mariele McInerney (Meeting Change).

Use of electronic Request for Proposals (eRFPs) to source hotels and venues has boomed in recent years. This joint whitepaper focuses on trends in eRFP use from the perspective of all con- stituencies involved in the sourcing process including corporations, meeting buyers, hoteliers, third party buyers, meeting management companies, meet- ing technology companies and conver- sion & visitor bureaus. While this has brought many benefits to the meetings industry, it also brings significant chal- lenges due to the high volume of eRFPs issued, which are outlined in the whitepaper.

“eRFPs are clearly a positive tool for the meetings industry, but there is no question that in recent years the rapidly growing use has created significant chal- lenes,” said Shimon Avish, GBTA Meetings Committee Manager and Managing Director of Shimon Avish Consulting LLC. “We were pleased to work with CIC’s APEX Workgroup to create this whitepaper identifying the next steps to making the eRFP process more efficient and effective in an effort to continue to bolster the meetings industry.”

The whitepaper reveals several emerg- ing best practices to reduce the number of eRFPs coming to market and increase satisfaction of all stakeholders involved in the process:

• Education – sourcing professionals must educate buyers on the impacts of over-issuing eRFPs as well as the benefits of both research to ensure appropriate hotels/venues are sourced and the impor- tance of providing complete information.
• Processes – adopting standardized templates and better communications are among the ways to improve processes in dealing with eRFPs.
• Limits – limits can be imposed through policy or technology to keep the number of eRFPs down.
• Technology Solutions – technology can be used to facilitate lead manage- ment processes for hotels/venues.

Alternate Technology Models – alter- nate models can cut reliance on supplier payments to the meeting technology sys- tem or in certain cases can allow for a touchless booking system that complete- ly eliminates the need for an eRFP.

“We are grateful we could put together the work and conversations from two independent industry workgroups into one whitepaper which articulates our col- lective issues and opportunities,” said Christine “Shimo” Shimasaki, CDE, CMP, Chair of CIC’s APEX Workgroup on eRFP and Managing Director of DMAI’s empowerMINI.com. “Now the real work begins as we roll this out to the buyers, hoteliers and all others who sell and strive towards more efficient processes.”

Industry professionals can find the whitepa- per at www.conventionindustry.org.