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WINTER 2013

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YOU HAVE MY ATTENTION

The case for face-to-face meetings

PLUS

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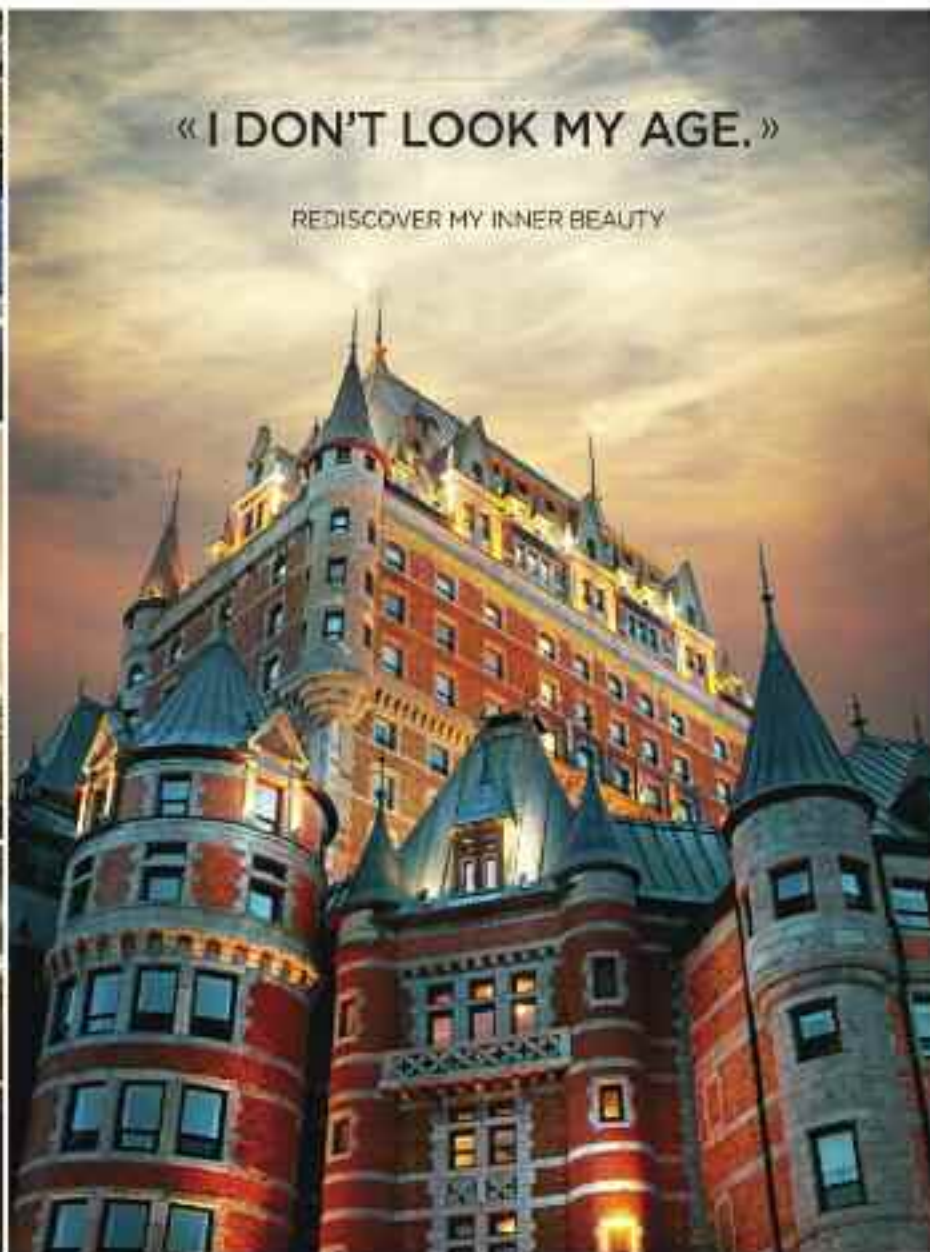
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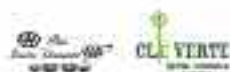


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FEATURES

6 Go Global or Go Home

What's your contribution to globalization?

By Paul Bridle, CSP, FPSA, FIBC

10 You Have My Attention

The case for face-to-face meetings

By Joel Sweeney

13 Meetings: Lever for Change

Making the leap to effective learning transfer

By Emma Weber

OUR FEATURE CONTRIBUTORS



For more than 20 years, Paul Bridle has studied effective organizations and the people that lead them. He speaks, writes and advises about trends in business and the workplace of the future.

• www.paulbridle.com



Joel Sweeney is a speaker, trainer, coach and author. Joel helps you leverage your Speaker's Tool Box to become a more effective speaker whether you are speaking one-on-one or one-on-one thousand.

• www.joelsweeney.com



Emma Weber is founder and director of Lever Learning, specializing in learning transfer. She has offered *Speaking of IMPACT* subscribers a copy of the www.plan template. Email her directly with TLA Conferences in the title.

• emma@leverlearning.com

DEPARTMENTS

4 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY NABIL DOSS

16 SPEAKING OF ROI BY BEVERLY BEUERMANN-KING, CSP

20 EFFECTIVE MEETINGS BY PERI SHAWN

21 TECH TALK BY PATTI POKORCHAK, MBA

30 INDUSTRY NEWS

31 ASK THE EXPERT BY PAT ARMITSTEAD

32 IMPACT PLAYERS

34 FUNNY BUSINESS BY MICHAEL KERR, CSP, HoF

SUPPLEMENT

24 Resorts - A Change of Scenery

By Jamie Parcels



The Next Summit

"When I have reached a summit, I leave it with great reluctance, unless it is to reach for another, higher one." ~ Gustav Mahler



Everyone has experienced at one point or another in their life, a "down" after reaching a summit. After all, how can you defy the laws of physics and avoid going downhill after an exhilarating stay at the summit? Well, as Mahler, the great composer and conductor, wisely suggested, what should come after a summit is another summit. Essentially, it's a matter of adopting a certain mindset to embrace an ever ascending journey. It's also a matter of accepting to relentlessly follow a moving target that will keep us fiercely focused on new heights.

In our case, after spending a few, yet compelling days together at the Global Speakers Summit, the real challenge will be to take what we have learned and accomplished to another level. This summit is about true connectedness. For the first time ever, all industry players from around the world took an active role in the programming of our Canadian summit to create the kind of synergy we need to stay on top of a changing reality and remain at the top of our trade. Our greatest challenge will be to nurture those virtual links which we have created, to extend beyond the summit; and to ensure we trump the natural human tendency to fall back on default mode when returning home to work isolated, in silos, and with a short-sighted perspective.

The great 20th Century French thought leader André Malraux once said, "The 21st century will be spiritual or will not be." In the current context of revolutions, upheavals and changes, I'd also say the future will be collaborative or will not be.

As such, as we are together at the summit, we need to explore new possibilities, new alliances, new approaches which will give life to new perspectives in a changed world. Sid Ridgley, CSP, and his summit team have accomplished a colossal job in creating a global platform for all of us to connect; it is now our responsibility to keep it alive to make sure the story doesn't end with the Global Speakers Summit. It is in our best interest to keep the dialogue going beyond borders to honour the global village our planet has become.

It's been an amazing journey to the summit this year; together we have learned, we have shared and we have grown in many ways. We've made great strides in understanding how, together, we can embrace a global future.

Now that we have taken it to the summit, the question is: "What is the next one?"

After all, the sky isn't the limit when you're reaching for the stars...

Nabil Doss
2013 CAPS National President



Canadian Association of Professional Speakers

Suite 300, 1370 Don Mills Road
Toronto, ON M3B 3N7
Phone (416) 847-3355 Fax (416) 441-0591
E-mail info@canadianspeakers.org
Website www.canadianspeakers.org

CAPS NATIONAL PRESIDENT
Nabil Doss

CAPS PRESIDENT-ELECT
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CAPS CEO
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Stacy Wyatt - www.canadianspeakerspecials.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Pat Armitstead; Beverly Beuermann-King, CSP;
Paul Bridle, CSP, FPSC, FIBC; Michael Kerr, CSP, HoF;
Jamie Parcells; Patti Pokorchak, MBA;
Peri Shawn; Joel Sweeney; Emma Weber

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Cutting Edge Communications, Inc.

201-1200 Pembina Highway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2A7
Toll free 1-866-669-2377
Fax 1-866-669-2336

E-mail jparcells@cecommunications.ca
Website www.cecommunications.ca

PUBLISHER

Jamie Parcells

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Stan Michalak

ADVERTISING SALES

Christian Johnson, April Kryswaty

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GO GLOBAL or GO HOME

What's your contribution to globalization?

By Paul Bridle, CSP, FPSA, FIBC

The word “global” is used widely today but has many dimensions that most people don't consider. Today, I read on Facebook, a lady blessing globalization because her son's music teacher from California was visiting Reno and had to cancel his lesson. She couldn't reach her son, so she reached out to her daughter in Pennsylvania by email, but her daughter's phone was missing, so she then emailed her friend in Utah who sent a text message to her son in Nevada telling him that his teacher was sick and had to cancel.

I am not sure that this was globalization since it was all happening in the United States, but she made a valid point – communication today allows us to reach around the world instantly. In Zimbabwe, Africa, where I was born, a phone call to my grandmother in England had to be booked a week in

advance. We would listen as the operators connected us across the globe until my grandmother's voice finally crackled through. Now, I can call my elderly father across the Atlantic on Skype for no cost. Last week, I had a conference call with business associates who were based in Brisbane, Australia and Derby, England, while I was in Toronto.

THE WORLD IS SHRINKING

Twenty years ago, the presidents and prime ministers of the world had days to digest information and make informed decisions. Now, they are forced to make decisions in minutes, while the media follows what is happening from the other side of the globe.

The link between the speed of globalization and improvements in communication provided by technology is impor-

MOST PEOPLE ARE VERY AWARE THAT WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD CAN AND PROBABLY WILL AFFECT THEM AND THEIR BUSINESS IN SOME WAY

tant to understand for all those in the meetings industry. After all, meetings are all about communication. To sit at the heart of globalization and to embrace it means we play a part in making a better world. Of course, communication is only as good as the content of the communication. Poor or even false content is dangerous.

Those who plan, organize and deliver meetings, have a responsibility to ensure that meaningful communication is delivered in a timely and effective manner. So what do we need to be aware of if we are to embrace globalization?

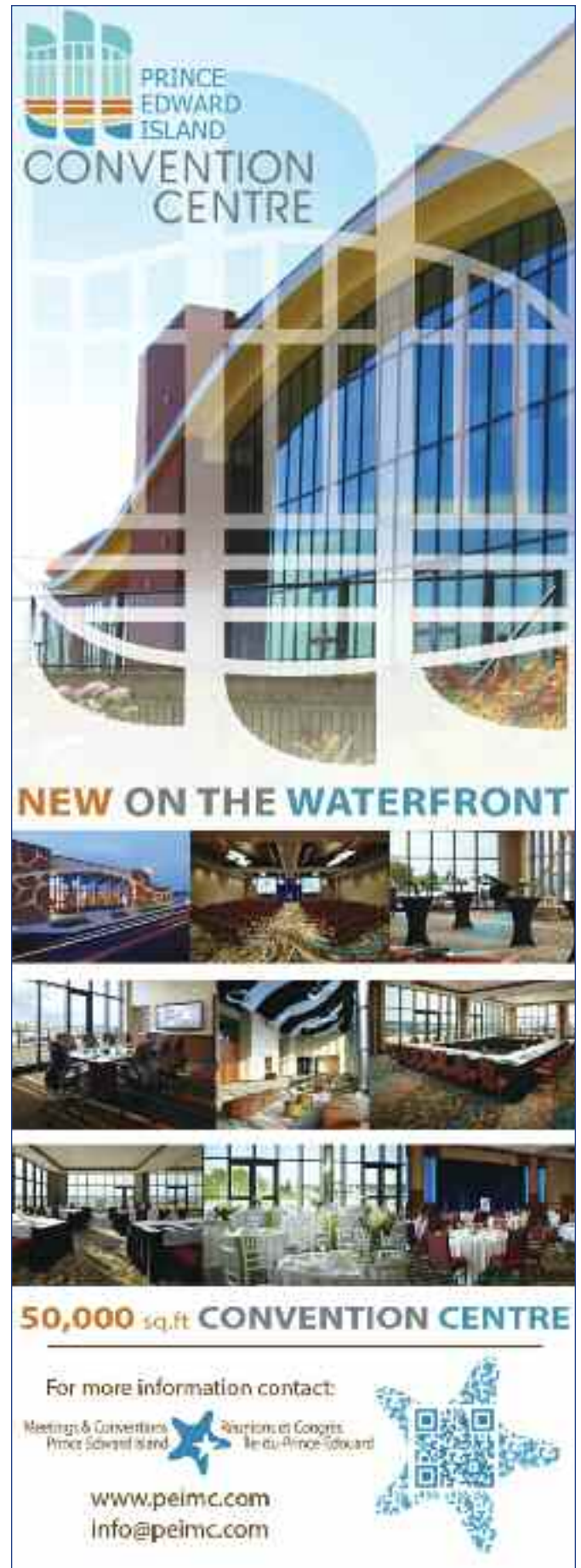
First, we need to appreciate that technology is a tool that services our industry, not the other way around. Technology opens our meetings and events to more people, in more places, than ever before. For example, there was a time when the Olympic Games cost the host country and city dearly and always lost money. One man realized that advancing technology meant the games could be broadcast live around the world. This meant that revenue from people attending the event was augmented with revenue from broadcasting rights and increased sponsorship and advertising. The games started to be profitable and cities started to bid to host the games.

Technology opens the doors to globalization and allows a range of new opportunities that enhance our meetings and events. Too many meetings use technology simply because it is new or they are sold on it as an end in itself. When embracing and seizing the opportunities of globalization, meeting planners and event organizers need to know what they want to achieve and how technology can help them achieve it.

Most people are very aware that what is happening on the other side of the world can and probably will affect them and their business in some way. We only need to look at the recent economic crisis to see an exaggerated example of that. Many businesses are dependent on suppliers or customers on the other side of the planet and they have staff and teams scattered across the globe. A recent T-shirt said, "I love my team! One day I hope to meet them in person!"

THINK GLOBAL, PLAN LOCAL

Understanding that this is how businesses operate also enables us to understand the importance of thinking globally when planning meetings or events both in terms of outgoing communication and input. This means that there are likely to be people that cannot attend the event but need to be part of it in some way. Maybe they can't attend due to the distance, cost of travel, the time it takes, or many other reasons, but it



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is vital for them to know what happens and be connected either in real time or as close to that as possible.

This may mean broadcasting the event or recording it to be shown at an alternate time. However, it is not only the speakers or workshops that should be considered. Recording some of the social aspects and interviewing some of the delegates also allows the person not attending to get a greater appreciation of the meeting or event. It helps them connect and be part of the experience. The opportunities to do this can make a meeting a lot more meaningful to many more people and engage them wherever they are. Of course, part of this requires considering language and cultural differences as well. The way a message is delivered needs to be considerate of local issues or challenges. What works in North America may not necessarily work in Asia and the communication needs to take that into consideration. This deals with the outgoing element, but there is the input element as well.

Input means globalization requires that those attending are getting information with a global perspective. People want to know what is happening in the world that may affect them. A global trend does not necessarily start in our backyard so, content needs to be in a global context. A company selling into a foreign market is not just doing the same things it does back home. It has to approach business in a manner that is relative

to that country's practices. So, the content of meetings has to take into account the issues that may affect the delegates in the audience (most are very aware of the issues that directly affect them), and provide information on issues that are outside their perception – the wider, global issues that are in their blind spot and may impact their future.

EMBRACING GLOBALIZATION

So, globalization is happening and will continue to happen. The question is, do we all have the mindset to understand what our contribution needs to be in order to remain current and relevant in a global world? Everyone in the meeting industry needs to appreciate we are central to globalization. That does not mean we are driving it, it means we are part of ensuring it happens in a meaningful and efficient manner. Resisting it or turning a blind eye to it means we do not give our customers and their delegates the richness of quality they deserve and need. Being part of oiling the wheels of globalization ensures we stay current, meaningful and relevant in a changing and demanding world.

Meetings and events will always take place. The manner, approach and content will change, not driven by technology, but by globalization.

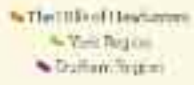
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The case for face-to-face meetings

By Joel Sweeney

There are many technologies that make it easier to hold virtual meetings that save time, cost and inconvenience. Yet, there is a very strong case to be made that there are times that those factors pale in contrast to the value that can be derived when participants meet face to face.

A white paper, *The Future of Meetings: The Case for Face-to-Face*, by Christine Duffy and Mary Beth McEuen, acknowledges that the advent of virtual meeting technologies has created three formats for group meetings; virtual, face-to-face and a combination of the two. Many companies are using all three. The challenge for meeting planners is to determine which format is most effective for important business outcomes. The face-to-face format is the most expensive and is expected to provide the greatest return on investment.

Duffy and McEuen identified three business needs that are best met through face-to-face meetings:

- To capture attention. Full attention is needed when you want to initiate something new or different, such as a new or different relationship, culture, strategy, or product.
- To inspire a positive emotional climate. Do not underestimate the power of inspiration and positive emotional climate as a real currency of business.
- To build human networks and relationships. Information and resources are not the only things needed for work to get done effectively. Increasingly, information is being commoditized, while there is much greater value in "people networks and relationships."

In his white paper, *Why Face-to-Face Business Meetings Matter*, professor Richard D. Arvey, Ph.D., says, "Under conditions of low time pressure or urgency, when decisions are relatively less important, when consensus is not a necessary requirement and when the communication is mainly about providing information, computer mediated modalities represents a more appropriate communication choice. However, when there is a need for more 'rich' communication channels, face-to-face communications are perhaps a more effective media channel. And, of course, an appropriate mixture of both might well best serve the interests of organizations."

Improvements in communication technology have driven an increase in

the use of teleconferencing, video conferencing, webinars, etc. as an alternative to face-to-face meetings. As airfares and accommodation costs continue to climb, the use of these alternatives become more prevalent, particularly for organizations that have a large geographical base.

While these alternatives may have attractive cost benefits, they also have disadvantages. They are not suitable for all meetings. There is a tendency for the participants to multi-task during the sessions. They can work on something totally unrelated to the topic being discussed, check email, engage in text messaging or even have side conversations with colleagues. The opportunity to disengage is much greater than in a face-to-face setting.

Electronic conferencing doesn't provide the holistic experience that face-to-face meetings offer. You don't get the opportunity to see the body language, facial expressions or make eye contact. Even video conferencing doesn't capture the group dynamics (e.g. how others respond when one member is speaking).

Electronic conferencing is an efficient and quick method for sharing information and knowledge. However, if quality and timely decisions have to be made, then electronic methods do not always work well. Improved decision making may outweigh travel expenses and time.

The next consideration is cost. This will be impacted by three main factors; number of participants, amount of time required and geographical range. A face-to-face meeting may limit the number of participants that can be involved.

Deciding to have a face-to-face meeting is only the first step. Proper preparation is required to ensure that the meeting is a success and that it is productive. There must be clarity on the objectives and desired outcomes, the right participants must be engaged, a clear agenda, sufficient time allocation, suitable facilities and adequate resources. Face-to-face meetings can be costly. It is important that proper preparation occurs to make sure they are maximized.

Ravi Tangri, CSP, chief rocket scien-

tist with Chrysalis Strategies Inc. (www.navigatechange.net), had this to say about face-to-face meetings: "Face-to-face meetings are necessary if you are driving change. You need the people involved and engaged in order to maximize the buy-in required to affect change. In virtual meetings, there will always be some level of disengagement. Buy-in comes emotionally. The participants must be engaged. Change is not just a logical thing. It requires active engagement. In a virtual meeting you risk disengagement."

Tangri also advises that you do not start by deciding if the meeting will be virtual or face-to-face. Start, instead, by defining the objectives and desired outcomes, then decide whether or not a face-to-face is required.

Face-to-face meetings provide the opportunity for participants to engage in side-line conversations during breaks. This is often valuable to the meeting itself and to accomplishing meeting objectives. This is less likely to

occur in virtual meetings.

Dawn Baldwin, past president of MPI Atlantic and senior sales manager for the Halifax World Trade & Convention Centre, believes that face-to-face meetings are effective and necessary. "If you are dealing with a large number of people, then face-to-face is the best approach. Ideas are generated more quickly and it fosters greater creativity. It is easier to stay focused on a topic or challenge. It is easier to motivate people in a face-to-face session. The relationships that are created from face-to-face meetings are much stronger. Something special happens when you shake their hand and engage in eye contact. The personal contact makes the relationships a lot more human and the decisions that are made more binding."

Some organizations have a large number of home-based employees. The most effective way to help these employees develop an organizational culture, improve company loyalty and build strong relationships with their

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peers is through the use of face-to-face meetings.

Conducting face-to-face meetings involving diverse cultures requires sensitivity and awareness. Knowledge and understanding of social protocol and cultural norms will be important considerations to ensure a successful meeting. Baldwin pointed out that there are still some cultures that do business with a handshake.

Paul du Toit, CSP, commented on smaller face-to-face meetings and had this to say: "Being selective about whether to meet face-to-face, virtually or simply on the phone is critical to reaching your objectives".

Here are some of his key considerations:

- How clear is the intent of the meeting? Does the person seem to know exactly what is required?
- How complex is the meeting?
- What is the value/size of the enquiry in scope or financial terms?
- Is there a greater need that may be

uncovered by meeting face-to-face? Often the initial enquiry is the "tip of the iceberg."

- Is it necessary to meet more than once? Sometimes, an initial virtual meeting can be used to set up a face-to-face meeting.

"Face-to-face meetings have the advantage of three-dimensional body language and rapport and will always remain the first prize. The downside is obviously the time utilized to get there and back. However, a virtual meeting has the advantage of being able to link parties in two or more locations across different time zones – an advantage that can outweigh many others under certain circumstances. If several meetings are required, virtual may be an attractive option," said du Toit.

Face-to-face meeting allows more flexibility to utilize consensus building techniques such as brainstorming, breakout groups and facilitated complex discussions. Complex proposals, controversial change and confidentiali-

ty are all easier to deal with in a face-to-face meeting.

Duffy and McEuen noted: "Large-group, face-to-face meetings and events are the best option when a business or organization needs to capture attention necessary for a new or different strategy, relationship, or product. They are the best option for inspiring people and building a positive emotional climate that influences decision-making and performance at every level. They are the best option for building the strong relationships and community that form powerful, informal levers for success in our post-recession business world. Finally, face-to-face is the only option for celebration and recognition rituals that enliven the human spirit and shape the cultural norms of the organization."

Professor Arvey says: "Given the existing data and research, it is clear that face-to-face meetings are used less frequently and there is substitution via the use of computer-aided communication devices. However, the data indicate that meetings indeed 'matter' and that the use of face-to-face meetings has a variety of valuable psychological as well as business outcomes."

There are more choices available to meeting and event planners. There are many examples where organizations use both virtual and face-to-face meetings in combination to make the event available to those who are unable to attend because of scheduling or cost. Virtual meetings can be a valuable supplement to face-to-face meetings. The use of electronic meeting methods will continue to grow. However, face-to-face meetings will continue to play an important role for most organizations and businesses. They offer a variety of psychological and business outcomes that can't be achieved by using virtual methods alone.

Eliminating face-to-face meetings in favour of virtual meetings should not be the objective. Instead, finding the right mix and best use of the methods is the right way to maximize the benefits and return-on-investment. **SOI**



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POWER OF THE DREAM – PART II

This article is a follow-up to one published in the Spring issue of *Speaking of IMPACT*. Once a dream is achieved (from a meeting perspective), how do you continue to keep an organization motivated, and willing to continue to dream big? How can the evaluation of a meeting be used as spring board to even higher performance?

Learning transfer may be a new concept to many, but it is one that I believe will become increasingly important to the meetings and events industry. In his spring article *Power of the Dream*, Ravi Tangri, CSP, wrote about the need for “events to go beyond what they have been in the past.” He wrote about memorable events that need to truly touch people. In my view, your meeting needs to not only be remembered after the fact, but live beyond the event in terms of true business impact.

In Canberra, Australia, in 2012, I facilitated a *Turning Learning into Action Conference* session at the Kmart Tyre and Auto company conference. They had inspiring speakers and some very valuable keynotes, but the company wanted to ensure that the delegates put into action what they learned at the event.

Study after study shows, in most cases, learning transfer, even from training programs, is only around 10 to 20 per cent, which means the financial and time investment in the training is never fully maximized. Is your meeting being maximized? Wouldn't it be ideal if you knew that delegates were capturing key insights and items then taking action back in the workplace?

MEETING EFFECTIVENESS

Increasingly, meeting organizers don't just want to deliver a meeting. They also want to make a real difference back in the workplace. A meeting or event is just a means to the desired end. The desired end is the implementation of the changes the delegates gain from the meeting.



Making the leap to effective learning transfer

By Emma Weber

Could it be that the real objective is for the event delegates to do what they've learned? Are companies getting that desired change post-meeting? I would argue that without a robust strategy it is almost impossible to achieve effective learning transfer after an event.

Who is responsible for ensuring learning transfer? The individual? Their manager? The speakers? The meetings and event team? How can we measure whether the learning is transferred? What can be done to create effective learning transfer? How can meeting planners take on responsibility for more? It would be easier to keep our proverbial head in the sand, but if the aim is to go beyond what we have done in the past, this is the opportunity to do so.

TRAINING IS LEARNING

Let's see what we can learn from the training industry and how this can be applied. In many cases, learning and development professionals have contributed to the gap between knowing and doing. For example, Broad and Newstrom wrote in *Transfer of Training* about the importance of the manager before and after training. As the graphic in *Figure 1* (next page) shows, combining training with coaching potentially achieves an 88 per cent learning transfer, a 400 per cent increase.

So why do we persist with traditional training events with no specified follow up? Meeting professionals tell me they feel robust learning transfer is too expensive, too hard, or can't be measured anyway.

For conferences and meetings, this process can be effectively driven by a

At the conference, we facilitated a session where each individual created a personalised action plan for what they were taking away, why it was important to them and when they would have the change in place. They created a plan for the steps to action, then an accountability call was scheduled with a buddy

O = Options: Use brainstorming to

[illegible]

Turning Learning into Action[®] (TLA):

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graph LR; subgraph Learning; direction LR; Preparation[Preparation] --> ACTION[ACTION]; ACTION --> Evaluation[Evaluation]; end; Learning --> YellowArrow[Yellow Arrow pointing right];
```


develop options and opportunities for a way forward.

N = Next steps: Gain commitment for the next steps that will take place between ACTION sessions, to secure the behavioural change.

Effective questioning techniques enable the participant to develop appropriate solutions based on the information and skills they learned on the training course, coupled with their individual thoughts and beliefs. This results in the participant assuming ownership of the change process, creating a higher level of success. In addition we use specific "Keeping Them on the Trajectory" processes that give the managers or team delivering the process the tools and confidence to handle any roadblocks to progress.

For the meetings where we didn't have the luxury of the using the full process, delegates used the key questions they were given at the event to facilitate their own buddy calls. The magic of the process is that even knowing you need to call someone and discuss specifically the action you have taken will almost always mean you will take more action than you would have done without.

Stage 3: Evaluation

The final stage is when the changed behaviours are observed, evaluated and collated by the individual and/or their manager. Kmart was keen to have the managers drive the evaluation, so the feedback was mainly anecdotal. The good news was that Kmart reported some interesting phone calls and discussions taking place with the added benefit of getting different areas of the business to dialogue and build relationships after the event.

TAKE THE LEAP

The time is right for meeting and events professionals to show clearly their contribution to their organizations' bottom lines by making events bear real fruit back in the workplace.

Time to facilitate the leap to effective learning transfer. **SOI**

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When the Plate is Full

Meeting participants come to our meetings with many things on their minds – like stress and even depression

It is important to get as much as we can from the time that we have available, and planning a conference is no different. However, in today's hectic, time-pressured, doing-more-with less world, pushing your conference delegates to the limit and not being aware of their health needs may be doing more harm than good.

Conference participants come to us, in most cases, tired out, worn out and looking for a respite from the day-to-day challenges they face. They want to learn strategies to problem solve their daily dilemmas as promised in the conference brochure, but they only have so much energy left for creativity and engagement. The "plate is full" and, for some, beyond full. Ten per cent of our delegates may be dealing with depression, 12 per cent may be experiencing an anxiety disorder and many more are reporting that stress is making them feel overwhelmed on a daily basis.

To help us find strategies to ensure a stress-less meeting experience, we interviewed two prominent lifestyle experts and speakers to offer their suggestions for planning your next meeting: Michelle Cederberg, author of *Energy Now! Small Steps to an Energetic Life* and Andrea Holwegner, known as the "The Chocoholic Nutritionist," both from Alberta.

What are some of the mistakes you see organizers make in planning their meeting that may negatively impact their participants?

Michelle: Too tightly scheduled programming. I've spoken at events where

sessions are so tightly packed together that attendees don't have time to catch their breath. If the goal of the conference is indeed learning and networking, then attendees need time to energize, de-stress and connect with others between sessions. A break should be long enough that attendees have time for a bathroom stop, the opportunity to grab a snack and not eat it on the go, and even the chance to connect with other attendees to talk about the session(s) they just attended. Less frenzy, means better intake of information and an overall more positive conference experience.

Andrea: Improper food selection. Imagine you are the presenter of an afternoon wellness seminar at a conference, just after what was described in the event brochure as the sugar-fix break. The smorgasbord full of treats served at the break has left people dozy and unable to concentrate. This doesn't mean there is no room for fun (after all I am the chocoholic nutritionist), but to maximize attendee energy consider these best practices:

- Continental breakfast: Skip pastries since these foods don't have enough protein and attendees will get sleepy. Add a source of protein such as peanut butter, nuts, yogurt, cottage cheese or hard-cooked eggs. Serve fresh fruit trays, water and un-sweetened juices.
- Hot breakfast: Go for whole-grain toast or whole-wheat pancakes with scrambled eggs or a vegetable and cheese/egg frittata. Round out the meal with oatmeal, fresh fruit salad, yogurt and bran cereal.
- Cold lunch: If you are bored with stan-

By Beverly Beuermann-King, CSP



As one of the leading stress management speakers in Canada, Beverly has worked with leaders, teams, front-line workers and volunteers to utilize her S-O-S Principle™ to effectively deal with today's stressful challenges.

• www.worksmartlivesmart.com

dard wraps and sandwiches, consider a salad bar. Serve chicken, shrimp and beef in cubes or on skewers. Include alternative protein sources such as chickpeas, cheese cubes, pumpkin seeds and slivered almonds. For dessert, serve fruit crisp.

- Hot dinner: Offer dark green mixed salad, seasonal mixed vegetables, chicken or beef entrée with limited added fat, and rice or oven roasted yams and potatoes prepared with a small amount of oil. For vegetarians, offer vegetable lasagna, lentil curry or tofu stir-fry. For dessert, serve chocolate-dipped strawberries and a fruit tray.
- Save on cost and improve nutrition by offering jugs of water and skipping pop.

Michelle: Sitting too long and poor room set-up. In practically every presentation, I show participants four or five exercises that they can do with just their body weight, or the chair they're sitting on. Talk about an immediate energy increase in the room. Watch the temperature. Too hot and people are uncomfortable or dozing, too chilly and people are focused on the fact that they don't have a sweater. Overcrowding leads to discomfort when participants can't easily come and go or when they feel like someone is encroaching on their personal space.

Any final comments?

Andrea: I would estimate three-quarters of the clients my practice sees for nutrition counselling suffer with mental health issues. Corporations and associations hire wellness experts to inspire their team to take personal responsibility for

their health, yet sometimes fail to walk the talk in the way they conduct business. Promoting mental health at our conferences is essential.

Michelle: My pet peeve is when organizations say they support health and wellness, but don't provide means for participants to get ideas, information and guidance around it. I'd love to see EVERY conference include sessions on stress, health and wellness, alongside their business and work-related offerings.

Stress and mental health issues can be overwhelming, but by understanding and promoting good nutrition, fitness, sleep and breaks in a more relaxed environment, we allow our attendees to get the most from the opportunities and learning that we offer to them. **SOI**

BEST HEALTHY SNACK ATTACKS

- Sliced fruit tray and cheese cube tray
- Yogurt parfaits (yogurt, berries and granola)
- Whole-grain crackers and cheese platter
- Bruschetta on whole-wheat baguette with cheese
- Devilled eggs and raw veggies and dip
- Whole-wheat pita bread wedges and hummus
- Trail mix or individual bowls of nuts and dried fruit
- Snack-size unsweetened fruit and yogurt smoothies
- Shrimp with cocktail dipping sauce and whole-grain crackers
- Mini bran or oatmeal muffins, yogurt cups and fresh fruit salad cups
- Mini skewers of satay chicken, beef or shrimp, and veggies and dip
- Regular or decaf lattes, tea lattes and a bowl of fresh fruit



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From Learning to Execution

Need results? The pros know what works and what doesn't

“We had a good meeting last year. Everyone had a great time, but we didn't see any improvement in our results. How can you ensure we'll get results this year?”

These are the words of Melanie, the executive assistant responsible for arranging her corporation's event this year. You want to do your due diligence, so they get results. Though Melanie's company is a new account, you also know they could become major business for you if the meeting delivers results.

You playfully name Melanie's event *Mission Results* and start your planning. Step one: prepare for your next conversation with Melanie. You write down the questions you'll ask to discover:

- What results her executive team would ideally like to see from the meeting;
- How the company is going to measure those results;
- What was done last year to apply the ideas from the meeting; and
- Who their speakers were in previous years.

Step two: find a speaker who has the expertise Melanie's company requires. A fast and easy way to do this is to:

- Visit the CAPS website and use the speaker search tool;
- Review your short-listed speakers' LinkedIn profiles to see what other clients have said about them; and
- Select a speaker who best matches Melanie's meeting outcomes.

Step three: work with your speaker to create results for Melanie's company.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Just like planning for any event, there are things your speaker(s) can do before the meeting to impact the outcome of the event. Your speaker(s) may do all or a combination of the following:

- Assessments/Diagnostics – Many speakers have these tools to help better match their content to the participants' needs;
- Pre-Event Material – Your speaker might provide a blog post, a video or a book to engage participants with some of their ideas and increase the group's interest in learning at the meeting;
- Prepping by Leadership Team – It's not unusual for corporate staff to come to meetings without knowing what they're all about. You and your speaker can help ensure that the team is more prepared this year by encouraging management to ask team members to return from the meeting with ideas that they can apply. This kind of priming can increase the participants' retention of the meeting content and help them apply what they learned.

DURING THE PRESENTATION

This is where a professional speaker can really shine. They will have practiced and polished their presentation, so let them do their magic. They'll know what works and doesn't work to make the event successful. They might use interaction, technology or participation to increase the outcomes of the meeting.

BETWEEN PRESENTATIONS

Some of the best learning can happen during the networking segments of an

By Peri Shawn



Peri Shawn is the award-winning author of the book *Sell More with Sales Coaching*. She specializes in helping sales executives and their teams sell more, better, sooner and more often.

• www.CoachingandSalesInstitute.com

event. With this in mind and depending on the company's needs, be open to your speaker developing an exercise or activity for the group to do during networking.

AFTER THE EVENT

After the event, focus the participants' energy on two things: the application of ideas and the accountability of that application.

This is where an experienced professional speaker will be extremely helpful to you. They'll understand that to have sustainable results there needs to be a focus on application and accountability. Most professional speakers will have tools and processes to facilitate this, including meeting agenda ideas, follow-up material and/or coaching.

The most effective of these is coaching. It is probably your single most important key to ensuring Melanie's event is indeed *Mission Results*. A presentation followed by coaching guarantees the application of ideas and the accountability of the team to get measurable results.

Many speakers offer coaching services. If the speaker you've selected doesn't provide coaching, inquire about Melanie's company's internal coaching structure. They may be able to create the coaching system to provide the results desired.

By taking these steps, you ensure Melanie's company achieves the measurable results they desire. *Mission Results* accomplished.

SOI

By Patti Pokorchak, MBA



Patti Pokorchak, MBA, is a small business sales and marketing expert at Down to Earth Marketing. She has sold and marketed to organizations in 25 countries and is known for her practical advice and wacky ideas that work.

• www.dtemarketing.ca

Boost Your Direct Mail Responses

What is old is new again. Not just in fashion, but in marketing, too

Because of its relative rarity, snail mail is getting marketing's attention again. I'm big on that marketing F-word, *focus*, which is why I love direct mail. It's targeted to your ideal prospect – or it should be.

How to increase direct mail response in two simple steps:

- 1 Understand your audience,
- 2 Write a compelling offer to them.

It really is that simple. The better you understand your target market, are able to describe their pain and pleasure and what makes them respond, the easier it is to design a direct response piece to make them say YES!

It's simple, but it's not easy. Coming up with the compelling offer can be challenging, so try putting yourself in their shoes – to what would you respond?

One way to get started is to skim through trade publications and see what headlines grab you. What stands out visually? Keep an ideas clip file – whenever you see a great ad, tear it out. Browse through the ads for inspiration and ask yourself these questions, "Does this make me want to go to their website or call them? Is it effective?"

Most associations put on events of one kind or another. Getting more people to attend these events can increase non-dues revenue significantly as the overhead and effort to get a gathering off the ground are the same whether three people or 1,000 show up. Associations should also continually engage their members to ensure that they renew their membership, so more is on the line than just the success of a single event.

So what makes for a compelling offer? Act like the godfather and make them an offer they can't refuse.

Eric Vengroff, MBA, president of Searchlings, a direct response company, uses the threat or bribe approach in crafting his offers or subject lines. The bribe – think carrot – can be a discount, contest or some kind of freebie that specifically appeals to the target market.

The threat is usually fear-based – think stick or punishment – what you might be missing, what you might lose and what danger is there in not responding.

Whether you use postcards or email, the key to success is standing out. The first step is getting people to open your letter, glance at your postcard or read your email.

Picture a flamingo in a flock of penguins. You want to be the flamingo – to stand out and be noticed.



Be bold, be wacky, but be funny only if you are certain it is relevant and won't offend anyone. Be clear and concise in your compelling offer – why they should contact you NOW or go to your website for details. Have only one offer so you don't confuse the reader. Include your toll-free number, email and website. Make it really easy to respond and you'll get more responses.

The PS and headline/subject line are the most important parts of a direct response piece. Your PS should repeat your offer and call to action. Keep it short, simple and imply a sense of urgency with "unlimited time offer," "only a few seats left," or "early-bird offer ends Friday."

Business coach and Hall of Fame speaker, Donald Cooper, CSP, offers his short biz articles to clients to send to their members in the months leading up to their conference. Prospective attendees get to "sample" Cooper's bottom-line content and are encouraged to sign up for his free management e-newsletter to start building a long-term relationship. This kind of systematic campaign builds the excitement of his talk and boosts attendance as attendees get to "taste" a bit of Donald before he arrives.

You probably never thought you'd want to be a flamingo – pink not your colour? In marketing, you want to stand out, rise above the noise and speak directly and personally to your target audience. Take your time to understand what motivates them, then write the few key words that make them respond. Bribe or threat – your choice.

SOI

CANADIAN



MARKETING

Mary Charleson, MBA

Mary is the author of *5-Minute Marketing* and *Word of Mouth Mouse & Mobile*. From students to entrepreneurs to executives, Mary's irreverent approach to learning makes marketing fun. Her 5-minute segments and storytelling are customized for your client, after gaining insight on challenges faced and industry trends. Be sure to visit her blog: fiveminutemarketing.com.

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By Jamie Parcels



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A Change of Scenery

When relaxation is the order of business

Canada's resorts continue to gain popularity as the primary destination for meetings and conventions.

Finding a space in which to escape often requires looking no farther than your own backyard. Imagine a place where you can hear yourself think; no bright lights, no drone of traffic, a bit of wilderness, a myriad of stars and the peaceful sounds of silence. We've got it all right here.

From the imperial mountains of British Columbia to the old country charm of Atlantic Canada – Canadian resorts offer meeting planners an exceptional opportunity to meet and partake in some of the world's most beautiful and exciting surroundings. These locales have drawn national and international attention for years, but their esthetic value, combined with the current economic climate, is contributing to a surge like never before.

Canada is an exciting diversity of landscapes and immense tracts of wilderness where nature still reigns

supreme. Lush, fertile plains, massive mountains, dense forests, countless lakes and rivers and a network of parks and wildlife reserves are all accessible to today's delegates.

Superb skiing, exceptional golf resorts, fishing, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding and numerous water activities are available to ensure a memorable experience. There is no need to travel abroad to provide delegates with the lap of luxury. It's accessible, it's affordable and best of all – it's 100 per cent Canadian.

Imagine the luxury of being online while looking out at a snow-capped mountain top or watching the sunset over a majestic lake. Meeting planners can rest assured that today's resorts are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities designed to satisfy the demands of any corporate setting. Canada truly has some of the most beautiful topography in the world and, with direct flights into numerous remote areas, it's no wonder that Canadian resorts continue to grow in popularity at the national and international level.

DISPELLING PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS

Perhaps the days when Canadian resorts were considered exclusive to leisure travel have truly come to an end. In the past, many were characterized by their seasonal nature and were only open for certain parts of the year. Recent years, however, have witnessed many of the same resorts open year round in an attempt to capture their share of the market – and they have done so with considerable success.

Resort and conference facilities that are within driving distance of major population centres are becoming choice event destinations more and more, and no longer just for the ease of accessibility. Increased travel costs are compelling developers to opt for property locations in or near urban centres.

Given today's societal issues, like one's carbon footprint and the increasing cost of travel, meeting and conference planners are starting to have a lot more to think about when booking a venue besides how many stars or diamonds the facility has – and resort properties are getting geared up to accommodate.

"Our meetings growth has been robust and substantial," says Scott Mawhinney, assistant general manager, Notawasaga Inn Resort, located in Alliston, Ontario, 45-minutes from the GTA featuring 269 guestrooms and a ballroom that can accommodate up to 1,000.

"I would suggest that this is the case for most of Ontario. Resorts offer so many more advantages than in the city," he says. "Attendees don't have to travel by car and they can be more focused and get individual attention. As a result, the meeting has a greater chance for success. Today's meeting planners are looking for value for money, and resorts like ours definitely offer value."

Ontario, a province characterized by untouched wilderness, from the vineyards of the Niagara Peninsula to the rugged northern forests where the call of the loon is the only music, continues to maintain its magnetic appeal for meetings retreats.

Resorts across Canada are experiencing similar growth. Banff National Park is a haven for winter and summer outdoor enthusiasts, photographers, wildlife watchers and – of course – meeting delegates. Jasper, the largest and one of the oldest mountain parks in Canada, is renowned for its emerald lakes, waterfalls and outstanding recreation areas. Its pristine beauty adds to its resort appeal.

THE APPEAL

Canadian resorts are selling a casual experience that can only truly be captivated by nature. "If you want to motivate your employees and recharge your sales team, it is necessary for them to relax in order to receive the message



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– it's a different mindset when you go to a resort. Participants are more receptive when they don't feel that little umbilical cord to their office," asserts Marilyn J. Dalzell, CMP of Dalzell Meeting & Events Inc.

What could be better for a corporate retreat than skiing, swimming, hiking and – of course – golf. There's nothing like watching the perfect shot rise from the tee and journey throughout spectacular landscape. For an interesting twist, Les Rochers Bleus, a respected golf resort in Québec, is the only course in the province that allows golfers to rent furry, four-legged golf carts for a round. The sight of llamas raised on local farms is just one example of the unusual pleasures that various regions across Canada offer delegates for business and convention meetings.

It may be said that Québec is unequalled for its variety of resorts nestled in the mountains and beside lakes, yet convenient to urban centres. The Laurentians and Eastern

Townships are reputed for the beauty of their landscapes. Regardless of where you are in Canada, a cursory description of the natural beauty should be enough to attract even the most discerning meeting planner. Many suggest, however, that there are factors other than esthetics that are drawing the masses.

Today's meeting planners are tuned in to the value and activities that resorts have to offer. A number of incentives that were formerly exclusive to larger corporations are now being offered to companies of all sizes. There is little question that the corporate market has identified the value of team-building activities, and resorts excel at providing those that enable colleagues from around the country to interact with each other in a completely casual atmosphere.

Many of today's resorts offer exceptional incentive and spousal packages that make them ideal destinations for



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business and vacations. It is not uncommon for delegates to bring their entire families on these trips. Greater attendance generates more demand for the event and that translates into greater profit for the hosting resort.

The appeal for resorts in Atlantic Canada is no mystery. Where else can you top off the day's business with an evening excursion on the world-renowned Salmon River, network in a luxurious castle by the sea, whale watch off the coast of Cape Breton, enjoy a night out on the renowned George Street party strip in St. John's or enjoy salmon fishing in Miramichi and St. Andrews.

The Algonquin Resort, located about one hour outside of St. John, New Brunswick, is currently undergoing a \$35-million renovation to be finished this spring.

The property will feature three signature ballrooms and showcase more than 20,000 square feet of meeting and convention space. According to the facility's general manager, Tim Ostrem, the resort property will look to imbue the vibrant arts community into the guest experience to provide an experience that is like nothing else.

"We have a tremendous arts community and a focus on superb culinary experiences. In some instances, the two are combined. For example, the accents on our bar tables are sculpted by a local artist using reclaimed driftwood repurposed cutlery. Our partnership with the local community is

very important to us and our future guests are sure to appreciate the connectivity to this picturesque seaside town," he says. The Algonquin Resort will be a member of Marriott's Autograph Collection – the first in Canada.

Resorts are affordable with a captive audience. The rural and often secluded surrounding assist planners in capturing delegates' complete attention. In the absence of urban distractions and an abundance of fresh air and starry skies, resorts are able to concentrate on all of their guests' needs and provide individual attention.

SIGN OF THE TIMES?

The appeal of resorts may be attributed to a change in contemporary lifestyle. Perhaps the increase in disposable income, leisure time and advances in technology have taken a toll on the fast-paced work environment. Delegates in rural Saskatchewan can communicate with the office as well as those in downtown Toronto. Still, Canadian resorts continue to promote the benefits of a casual environment.

The number of resorts that continue to proliferate in the country is indicative of their popularity among both the leisure and business markets.

Issues for meeting planners, including time and distance, are offset by attractive pricing and esthetic beauty that is unequaled by an urban setting. This is to say noth-

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ing of the fine cuisine that is often compared to the greatest urban kitchens. Food and service are two essentials that you cannot neglect.

"Resorts are very competitive with their more traditional counterparts in several areas including room rates and food and beverage. Many of them have strong green practices and buy their food from local vendors – that's a huge advantage," says Dalzell.

"We know that price is an important factor when choosing a destination and that's why we have built a variety of accommodations. From our brand new two- and three-bedroom cottages to our rustic cabins that can sleep up to 12, we have options that will fit most budgets. Try doing that in a hotel," says Tyler Zolinski, marketing manager at Elk Ridge Resort, located two hours north of Saskatoon.

"We're flexible with what we have to offer – be it food and beverage or with our local partners. We can put package deals together with local suppliers so that we can reduce our prices and pass the savings on to our clients," says Danielle Strothers, sales and marketing manager, Black Rock Oceanfront Resort, a Ucluelet-based facility that opened in 2009, featuring a 2,000 square foot ballroom and a 900-foot wine cellar, complete with ocean view.

"Meeting planners are more discerning today – they are looking to be 'wowed'. Perhaps that means bonfires on the beach or sunset fishing and whale watching. Every year we ensure that we top ourselves with unique ideas," she says.

Organizations of all kinds are combining retreats as benefits to business. "Many resorts throughout our region offer very competitive rates in the spring and fall – and provide the same experiences you receive in the peak season,"

asserts Brianne Hearle, director of marketing, Destination Osoyoos.

Activities outside of the conferences are king. "Resorts will always have a market that is separate from the big convention facilities and they have to continue to offer a completely different, unique experience," says Hearle.

Meeting planners, too, are working with their clients to alleviate concerns related to issues associated with travel and the subsequent carbon footprint. Planting trees and working with suppliers and transportation companies that support green initiatives are such examples.

Says Dalzell, "The challenge resorts face is they don't get walk-in business so, often, the attrition and cancellation clauses tend to have tighter controls as to when you need to book, firm up and guarantee, and how closely a planner needs to manage room attrition."

She adds as the economy continues to grow and business become more innovative, the demand for resorts as ideal venues will continue to increase. There is little question that business can be both profitable and pleasurable. From quaint fishing lodges to palatial mountain retreats – the boardroom never looked so good.

SOI



Jamie Parcels is the publisher of *Speaking of IMPACT* magazine and general manager of Cutting Edge Communications.

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Fresh Focus, New Name

CANADIAN TOURISM COMMISSION'S (CTC'S) MEETINGS, conventions and incentive travel sector has revealed a fresh focus and a new name – Business Events Canada (BEC). CTC's BEC team will be leading its sales approach on aerospace, agriculture and food, clean technology, infrastructure/engineering, information/communication technology, life sciences and natural resources, seven priority sectors where Canada holds a competitive advantage. These priorities are in line with the areas in which Canada is internationally recognized as a centre of excellence.

"Business Events Canada will contribute to efforts under the Federal Tourism Strategy to foster the long-term competitiveness of the tourism sector while creating jobs in Canada," says Maxime Bernier, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism). The new BEC brand reflects the growing significance of the meetings industry to Canada's economy. Meetings, conventions and incentive travel attracts close to two million visitors each year to Canada with total spending of \$1.7 billion – almost a quarter of all money spent by inbound overnight travellers. Canada is the No. 1 location for outbound meetings business from the U.S., which brings in about \$1.4 billion annually.



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Exhibition Marketing

THE CENTER FOR EXHIBITION INDUSTRY RESEARCH (CEIR) has released a new report, *Exhibitor Ancillary On-site Marketing Practices*, documenting the most common on-site marketing activities exhibitors engage in while on-premise at an exhibition. It also takes a further, important step in identifying how effective users find each activity to be in supporting objectives for exhibiting.

CEIR's Research Director, Nancy Drapeau, PRC, notes: "This report reveals that most exhibitors are engaging in at least one marketing activity beyond activities in their booths. Results offer useful benchmarking statistics for exhibitors and great insights for organizers to consider when crafting onsite exhibitor marketing program opportunities. Effectiveness ratings offer great statistics to use in selling the value of such exhibition-sponsored activities."

The top five most common on-site marketing activities engaged in by exhibitors include: exhibition program advertising, speaking at educational seminars/workshops and sponsoring an exhibition giveaway. Each is used by more than seven out of 10 exhibiting companies.

Toronto Acclaimed

TOURISM TORONTO HAS BECOME THE FIRST CONVENTION and visitors association outside of the United States to reach a new international sustainability standard. The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Certification is awarded to destinations that achieve high standards in environmentally sustainable meetings, trade shows and conferences. Tourism Toronto has been recognized as achieving Level One certification.

"Toronto and our partners in the convention centres and hotel industry place a high premium on being leaders in sustainable meetings and events," said David Whitaker, president and CEO of Tourism Toronto. "In a highly competitive market, achieving a prestigious certification like this can give Toronto, and more importantly our clients and guests, a meaningful advantage. This adds to our city's strong reputation for hosting exceptional meetings and we are proud to be the first international destination to attain ASTM destination certification."

Introduced in 2012 to provide the event planning industry with specifications for producing events in a more sustainable manner, the certification is awarded to destinations that meet rigorous standards in areas such as waste management, energy, air quality, water, procurement and community partners. The standards were created in partnership with ASTM International, an ANSI-accredited standards development organization.

By Pat Armitstead



Pat Armitstead is past president of NSANZ and its speaker of the year for 2002. She is a keynote speaker, facilitator, author, coach and multi award-winning radio producer.

• www.joyology.co.nz

The Tagoras Report

A review of some of the latest findings arising from the Association Learning & Technology reports (www.tagoras.com)

When Jeff Cobbs wrote about “12 Trends Disrupting the Market for Lifelong Learning” in 2012, he opened the thinking of educators across all spectrums. The following is a précis of the things that got his attention.

MOOCS or MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES are evolving rapidly, with faculties like MIT and Harvard doing it. Professor Sebastian Thrun left Stanford to start his own online learning startup Udacity! MOOCS offer lectures, quizzes, educational resources and even credentialing.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCING is showing its value when you consider cost, convenience and logistics. Your attendees play the podcast, receive the notes, and you “give to get” by sharing your exclusive information for free or little charge.

As a presenter who incorporates a lot of improvisation, to be given permission to FLIP THE CLASSROOM was akin to meeting my “Presenter Fairy Godmother.” As the name implies, everything is back to front. The core material is in written form or a webinar, leaving class time for discussion, collaboration, co-creation and group interaction.

NEUROSCIENCE RULES. Full stop. Knowing left and right brain, learning styles, multiple intelligences and signature strengths, working with belief systems, slipping in some mind mapping and exploring brain plasticity, head, heart and gut brain is now all par for the course.

I loved Jeff Thomas’ comment “SOCIAL MEDIA! You’re soaking in it.” The invitation is to share stories that pay it forward, leverage others’ lives, encourage sharing, invite opinion and inspire greatness.

BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) conjures up “children should not be left to their own devices.” Devices now are almost extensions of the human form. They are used to connect with peers, search, watch videos, listen to podcasts, take courses and assessments. Where are we in all of that?

OPEN EDUCATION allows for changing content, and re-distributing. Mozilla, for example, has introduced Open Badges, a new online standard to recognize and verify learning. Open Badges is software and can display skills and achievements on social media and blogs.

In CONTENT MARKETING, you donate valuable content to attract prospects. I like spacing sales-oriented fliers with content-driven newsletters. The adage goes “Teaching Sells,” at least according to Brian Clark and the folks at Copyblogger.

Degrees and diplomas have been the standard of higher education while certification is the standard of continuing education. ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALING augers well for speakers and presenters who offer certificated programs.

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING is exciting, but also confusing and overwhelming. Most people are not effective life-long

learners and therefore need filters – or curators? Curators are people that sift through the content within a particular topic area or meme, and pull out what makes sense.

SELF-PUBLISHING is not just about print media but the possibilities that exist for creating and distributing content. From Wordpress to YouTube, we find havens for ambitious curators, many of whom come with unique bodies of knowledge! How attractive will you become by merit of your online presence?

We create a HUGE amount of DATA online and others mine that data and find out what is popular, what might be coming next and, perhaps most important, what is actually having impact.

We have 12 points. Twelve is the number of completion. Thirteen, however, is the number of upheaval so that new ground can be broken, enabling adaptation to change. We are living longer and learning broadly and nobody taught us to manage this degree of change. We have to constantly update, retool, rethink, and relearn. We need to be ensuring we build a platform that enables us to connect with learners in many different ways through many different channels: formally, informally, paid, free, online, offline. By doing this, we pave the way to enable lifelong learning and full self expression (for the learner as well as for ourselves). What could 2014 look like for you and your learners?

SOI



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DESTINATION OSOYOOS

The stunning backdrop of blue skies, desert hills and vineyards overlooking Osoyoos Lake make Osoyoos a natural choice for meetings. Osoyoos has a unique climate offering an extended summer, ideal for outdoor activities, and is located in one of the best wine growing regions in the world. Venues in Osoyoos range from those suited for small corporate retreats to conferences of 350 people: flexible spaces, catering, state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment and event planning services. To plan your event, visit www.destinationosoyoos.com.



FAIRMONT LE CHATEAU FRONTENAC

Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac is undergoing a significant renovation which will reposition it as one of the best hotels in the world. An additional 15,000 square feet of meeting space is being added to total 40,000 square feet in 23 meeting rooms. Guest rooms, including the Fairmont Gold floors, existing meeting space and food & beverage outlets will all be refurbished. Savour our creative banquet and catering offerings while enjoying the joie de vivre that Québec City has to offer only 20 minutes from the Jean-Lesage Québec City Airport. Visit fairmont.com.



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MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS PEI

Prince Edward Island, long celebrated for beautiful beaches, spectacular and dramatic natural views, amazing local cuisine along with top golf and sea-side resorts, now celebrates the opening of the new, waterfront, 50,000 sq.ft Prince Edward Island Convention Centre. Meetings & Conventions PEI is your complimentary service for all your island event needs providing accommodation searches, site selection assistance, proposal generation, pre/post activity planning, and more. Ask about our exclusive FAM tours or On Your Own Time FAMs. Visit peimc.com.



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By Michael Kerr, CSP, HoF



Michael Kerr, CSP, HoF, is listed as one of Canada's most in-demand speakers. Surf over to his website to discover how to put humour to work for more success in your organization.

• www.mikekerr.com

Bridging the Generation Abyss

Our various generations can be described as work-challenged, disloyal, intolerant or suspicious... nice

Is it just me, or are meeting audiences getting more diverse? Or are they just less uniform than they once were? Or are they simply not wearing uniforms anymore and I'm totally confused? Since there's a good chance it is just me, I should probably stop here, but you've probably guessed by now that that really won't slow me down.

So let's look at the facts surrounding audience diversity (or as some cable news networks might do, let's make up our own, but state them really, really confidently), starting by understanding the four different generational groups.

#1: THE PERENNIALS ARE COMING! (POST 1980)

You may have noticed that although speakers and meeting planners have managed to somehow circumvent the aging process, our audiences are actually getting younger as more perennials enter the workforce. Perennials grow best in the dark, dank basements of their parents' homes. (And they're never leaving, hence the term "perennial.") You may also know them as the "Y Generation," so named because many boomers wonder WHY they have to put up with them.

Perennials are often considered lazy; though many prefer the more politically correct "work-challenged" or "couch-centric." These young upstarts rise head and shoulders above the rest of your meeting participants, mostly because they are sitting on their mommy's laps.

Key question for meeting planners: "Do I, like, have to, like, actually come to the meeting, or can you just, like, text it to me?"

#2: THE X-FACTOR (1965-1980)

The Gen X-factors are so named because they possess that certain *je ne sais quoi*: a mysterious inability to remain loyal to anything other than their Frisbee golf team.

Expectations are very different with this generation: Gen X-factors have no expectation of staying at the same meeting for an entire three days and can be easily lured to another meeting with the promise of more flexible meeting hours and a cool games room. And, whereas the typical boomer might attend only one meeting per year over their entire career, X-Factors will attend no less than 8,746,212 meetings over their lifespan.

A word of caution for meeting planners: Be careful hiring boomers to speak to Gen X-Factors – they will often maim or

mortally wound boomers in an effort to steal their jobs.

Key question for meeting planners: "Since Gen X-factors are notoriously unimpressed with authority, how will you ensure they wear their name tags properly?"

#3: BOOMING WITH BOOMERS (1946-1964)

Previously known as "baby boomers" until someone cottoned on to how stupid that sounds, boomers are the T-Rexes of the modern world. They're big, they're loud, they have a massive ecological footprint and, somewhat surprisingly, they have tiny little hands. (Plus, of course, they'll soon be extinct.)

Golf, tennis, travelling, finding new ways to stay in their jobs to spite the younger generations and slowly making the planet unfit for future habitation are just some of the relaxing pastimes in which typical boomers partake. Meetings were essentially invented by and created for boomers as a safe refuge where they could meet to talk about the inadequacies of younger generations and exchange lactose-intolerant meal tips. (Your grandparents may have said they invented meetings, but a cursory glance at any *Mad Men* episode will reveal that what they really invented was the three-martini lunch and rampant sexism.)

Key question for meeting planners: "Recognizing that what boomers really want from their meetings is to simply get away from their families for as long as possible, how can you extend the life of a meeting to 3, 4, or even 5 weeks?"

#4: THE BEAT GOES ON (1835-1946)

There's an entire generation born before boomers that is still highly active in meetings. They're grumpy, they're hungry, and they've driven all the way to your meeting with the left turn signal on, so they want action! The technical term for this group is the "silent generation," but my experience with most of them is that they won't stop talking... ever – partly because they can't hear you speak, partly because they don't care what you have to say.

The silent generation is highly suspicious of anyone outside their own age bracket, ethnic background, area code, waistline, toupée colour, or Neilson rating profile.

Key question for meeting planners: "How can you use the vast reservoir of knowledge contained within the silencers to help save the planet from the boomers, the Gen X-factors from themselves, and the perennials from their parents' basements?" **SOI**

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