



OHIO CHAPTER

define

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL OHIO CHAPTER



FEB 09/MAR 09 ISSUE

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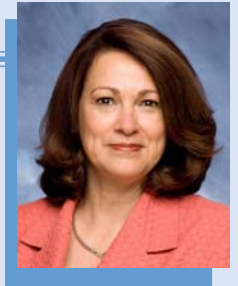
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OHMPI Mission Statement: To enhance the overall quality and awareness of the meetings industry by ensuring the professional development and growth of its membership through targeted educational programs and networking opportunities.

President's Column



By Gail McLaughlin, CMP, CMM

"In a world filled with doubt... we see a future of hope.
In this era of uncertainty...
we are grateful for your friendship and support.
SO... when the times get tough,
the tough get Partying!"
... Bonnie Mollica

So just how are we going to survive 2009, you ask?? Well, since we all have experience planning meetings, parties and special events within a strict budget, why not apply that experience to our own personal finances?! Each and every one of us has been asked to cut costs at work...now here are my tips to cut costs at home:

1. Cutting Food & Beverage Costs: Peruse the grocery store ads in your local paper, clip some coupons, then plan all your meals one or two weeks out. Most importantly, make a list and stick to it! No impulse shopping and/or buying. To avoid the "throw away blues, I cook all my meals in advance and freeze them individually. You'll really be surprised how easy it is not to mention all the free time you'll have for family, friends and leaves your favorite TV show. And clean-up is a breeze!
2. Cutting Gas Costs: Run all your errands at once—in one trip. I generally stop at the grocery store on my way home from work. But, for instance, if my son's dog, Peaches, needs to be groomed, I'll drop her off, do my grocery shopping, pick up my dry cleaning, go to the bank, etc. I have also changed my prescriptions to my local Giant Eagle, so I can fill my prescriptions at the same time I shop. I won't even tell you about the "fuelperks" I get for every \$50 I spend or how I charge everything to my VISA card so I can get reward points.
3. Gifts: Speaking of reward points, this year the yard boy, the postman, the trash man, the newspaper carrier and the recycle man all received gift cards from, guess what? my VISA Rewards Points and all I did was use my Chase VISA card. I also made "Kahlua" for many of my friends and family members, picked-up screw cap wine bottles at a wine tasting,

made my own labels, and if I do say so myself, basked in the ooohs and ahs! Each cost less than \$3—it just took a little extra elbow grease!

4. Cutting Costs of Paper Goods & Cleaning Products: Everyone has a different way of saving; you may use SAM's Club and buy in bulk; I purchase "off-brands" at Aldie's. Buying bulk is even worth losing those "fuelperks!" Go to your nearest dollar store for cleaning products. "Awesome", sold at Dollar General Stores for just \$1 per bottle, is a fantastic general cleaner. I took a bottle with me when I went to my son's house last year on vacation and it took permanent marker off the refrigerator and wall! I also have found making my own laundry soap a super savings plus honestly it gets my socks, towels and sheets a lot cleaner! You may be thinking I've lost my mind at this point... but it is very easy to do! In fact, making your own detergent comes out to less than \$1 per 32 loads.
5. Entertainment: Go to a matinee instead of an evening play or film. If you haven't seen the "new" REDBOX movie rentals around at grocery stores and gas stations, check it out! Movies are only \$1 a day!
6. Savings & Paying Down Debt: Ick! Yes, I know it is so hard to do, but if you start small this year, you'll be way far ahead... even if it's only \$5-\$10 per week. I admit I haven't been very good at this in the past, but this year, I am resolute.

Most of us are creative individuals and when faced with challenges, we can be very resourceful in accomplishing our goals. We are also optimistic; always looking at the glass as half full. I certainly think that this will be the year that we see more networking with peers. This will be the year we'll not only have to work hard, but we'll have to cut corners. This is the year to reach out to our fellow members and ask for recommendations and suggestions. We have a lot of talent in our Chapter, and this year will be the year that we need to spread it around so we all can be successful!

THE ROARING Twenties

2008 Ohio Chapter of Meeting Professionals International Annual Holiday Education & Scholarship Auction Celebrates the Roaring Twenties



By Barbara Yeater
Director of Special Projects, OHMPI
Crowne Plaza Cleveland City Centre Hotel

“23 Skid – doo! What ‘s that, who is that crazy Cat in the Pajamas!” If you attended the 2008 Annual Auction then you would know exactly what this meant. For those who did not, you missed one of the most enjoyable evenings ever held by the Ohio Chapter of Meeting Professionals International.



Our theme for the 21st Annual Event was the Roaring Twenties, the Great Gatsby Era. The Blackwell Conference Center Columbus Ohio, our Host Sponsor, once again produced a Fabulous Event to re-create the décor and menu of this timeless period. Other sponsors that added to the glamour of the evening were Fiesta Sounds and Connie Duglin Linens.



Our Flapper & Gangster Costume Winners were Lauren Estness from Association Connection and Jon Petz from Bore No More. Our Live auction item top bidder was Melissa Dowler-Atkins, CMP with HelmsBriscoe . This fabulous get-away item

includes 2 round trip afares and a 2 night stay at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass in Phoenix Arizona.

Through these trying economic times, the OHMPI Members and Guests stepped up and dug deep to make this a successful event. For that we would like to THANK each and everyone that donated and attended this year. The American Red Cross was also present as a recipient of our charitable donation to help us understand the important role they play in each of our daily lives.



As we begin 2009 the Ohio Chapter of Meeting Professionals International has some wonderful educational programs planned. We do hope you will take advantage of these motivational and inspirational programs and will continue to support us for your next fund raising program.

May you have a prosperous and successful New Year, Thank you again and until next time...



Designing the Perfect Meeting Registration System

By Julie K. Hewett, CMP
JulNet Solutions, LLC

Designing the Perfect Meeting Registration System

In reviewing our client needs for their online registration system we quickly came to the conclusion that it was time for a much needed update. While their current system “works” there was a growing rumble from the participants stating, “if you could...” or “if only it would...” To begin the process we started to think about the “must haves” for a registration system. Asking the question, “In a perfect world, our registration will be able to ‘???’”. We decided to ask this question using several online forums such as Twitter.com, MPI Group for CMPs on LinkedIn.com as well as members of the meeting community on Facebook.com.

In a perfect world a meeting registration system must be able to:

1. Provide for multiple methods for registration, online, fax, and telephone; as well as the ability to indicate future on-site registration.
2. Include multiple payment methods such as credit card, check, wire transfer or invoice at a later date.
3. Offer multiple registration attendee types – early/late; Participant, Exhibitor, Sponsor, etc.
4. Pre-populate attendee information for repeat registrants.
5. Allow for auto confirmation after registration is submitted, including automatic confirmation to programs such as Microsoft Outlook.
6. Provide the ability to self-edit the registration after submission.
7. Gather information about special needs or requests (Dietary, Handicapped, Wheel Chair, etc.).
8. Allow for Workshop/Education Track Selection.
9. Include sale of additional items such as conference proceedings, DVS, books, etc.
10. Gather accurate registrant data with the ability to export to a program such as Microsoft Excel.

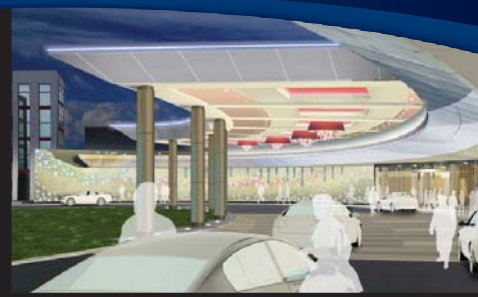
This list covers the basics of what a registration system should include. When looking at online providers of registration systems, they all pretty much provide for the basics. What sets them apart from each other are the “extras” that your particular meeting may need.

For member association meetings you may need to have your registration system closely tied into your membership management system. This would allow for automatic checking of membership status for example. A corporate training seminar registration system may need to track CEU's for an individual, thus keeping tracking of past participation.

When designing your registration system, start with a blank sheet of paper and outline the steps in the process. Ask yourself, what information do we need to gather? How will that information be used? Who needs to see that information and in what format? List each step in the process from initial attendee contact to actual attendance. Documenting at each step what takes place and why. Don't limit your thinking to “how it is done now” or “how can XYZ Company's system handle the steps” as this will limit your thinking process. Design the system based on what you want it to do. This process will aid you to better understand what you actually need from a registration system. Then take the completed document and share it with potential providers. Let them confirm if what you are asking works with their particular system. While you are not going to find a 100% match, you will know your starting point.

Julie K. Hewett, CMP
JulNet Solutions, LLC
An Association and Event
Management Company
www.JulNet.com





MEET IN THE MIDWEST NEW BLUE

In January 2009, Blue Chip Casino, Hotel & Spa in Michigan City, Indiana added a premier event center and hotel featuring a 15,000 square foot ballroom, including a built-in-stage, additional break-out space, 302 room hotel tower overlooking Lake Michigan and the luxurious spa blu, which makes it one of the largest facilities in Northwest Indiana.

This multi-functional space is great for conventions and trade shows, weddings and other special events. In addition, your group can enjoy non-stop gaming action, first class spa services and incredible dining and nightlife. If you need it, we have it! For more information on meetings and conventions at Blue Chip Casino, Hotel & Spa contact DeAnn Patena, Director of Sales at (219) 861-4861 or visit bluechipcasino.com.

How can audience response help today's event and meeting planner?

By Beth Hecquet
Director of Meetings and Events
National Association of Sports Commissions

First and foremost, TurningPoint audience response technology is a powerful tool that connects a presenter to the audience. Speakers and attendees interact during presentations using simple, intuitive polling software and response devices.

TurningPoint software seamlessly integrates with PowerPoint and Microsoft's Office Suite for 100% interactivity resulting in data collection within presentations. The RF (radio frequency) ResponseCard keypads are easy to use and easy to transport as they are only the size of a credit card and just as light.

The meeting/event planner could use our TurningPoint audience response system to:

- Increase attendee interactivity and anonymous participation
- Encourage collaboration and teamwork
- Gather critical feedback and insight either tracked or anonymous
- Assess participant understanding and retention
- Do "Green" evaluations and save numerous man hours of data input and save a tree or two by not using paper and pencils.
- Analyze collected data from 30 pre-set Excel/Word reports

Even though your speaker(s) may not use TurningPoint, you can provide the opportunity by suggesting its use. Worst case scenario is you use TurningPoint to do "Green" evaluations at the end of the event.

Here's what a couple of our customer's have said after using our TurningPoint technology:

"Turning Point to be used extensively during special Q&A Session with state regulators

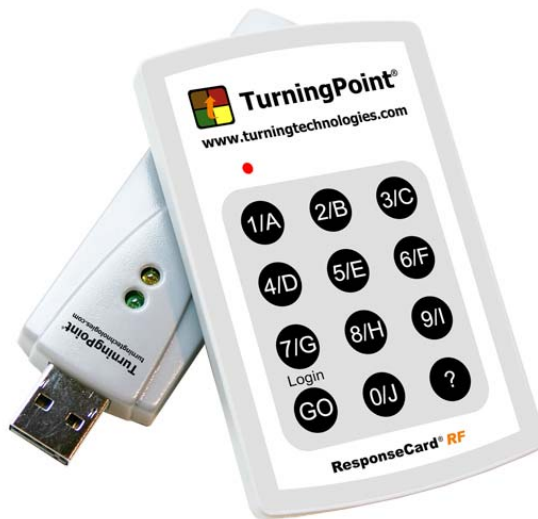
Richfield, OH January 22, 2008 — October Research Corporation announced today that First American CoreLogic will sponsor the use of Turning Point interactive technology at the 2008 National Compliance Summit for Title Companies on February 21 and 22 at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas (www.octoberseminars.com/ncs08).

"Nothing is more important in today's changing market than hearing the voices of title agents on the front line and connecting them to the technological tools that make their business more competitive and profitable," said **Brian Benson**, vice president, Title and

Settlement Services, First American Core Logic. "Turning Point is a technology that will allow the compliance summit to be a best-in-class learning environment by providing an opportunity for title companies to customize the curriculum on the fly based on what they are hearing from the experts on stage."

The interactive technology will allow summit attendees to instantly register their opinions to speakers and presenters on stage by using a key pad.

"We started to use the technology widely last year at our seminars and the response has been terrific from our customers," said **Kim Simpson**, CMP, director, Seminars and Conferences at October Research. "We mostly hear that people feel much more in control of the agenda and enjoy having the interactive ability to drive the conversation. They particularly like the instant polling feature that lets them hear what others think about current issues in the industry in less than a minute."



How can audience response help today's event and meeting planner? continued

Turning Point will be used extensively during a special Q&A session with several state regulators from across the country. The regulators include **Kathy Carr Hulbert**, managing attorney for the **Indiana** Department of Insurance, Title Insurance Division; **Paul Hanson**, chief examiner of the Investigations and Examination Unit of the **Minnesota** Commerce Department; **William Lacy**, director, Property and Casualty Division, **Arkansas** Department of Insurance; and **Tamara Kopp**, senior enforcement counsel for the **Missouri** Department of Insurance."



"We used TurningPoint Audience Response Technology for the first time at our 2008 conference and what a success it was for us. Not only did our attendees love the interactive nature of the conference, but our staff loved the ease of collecting survey information at the end of each educational session. And the fact that it integrated so easily with PowerPoint was a huge selling point for us. We will definitely use Easy Graphics and the Turning Point Technology at future conferences."



MPI Ohio Education Update

If you have suggestions for the Education Committee please contact one of the following City Chairs or Board Members.

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Renette Brazile, CMP
Dayton City Chair
Renette.Brazile@lexisnexis.com

Judy Stoof
Columbus City Chair
jstoof@irishisanattitude.com

Please add the following updates to your education calendar:

February 26, 2009
REACH Meeting - Columbus
"Grow Your Business & You!"
Location: Hilton Garden Inn Polaris
Columbus, OH

March 8-10, 2009
MidAmerica Conference
Lexington, Kentucky

MPIOH CMP Study Group - Spring 2009
Orientation on February 24, 2009
Location: Columbus Study Group
Quest Business Center
8405 Pulsar Place
Columbus, Ohio 43240
Cleveland Study Group
Embassy Suites Cleveland-Rockside
5800 Rockside Woods Boulevard
Independence, Ohio 44131

Member Updates!

Mark Wallisa, CMP just accepted a new position as General Manager at The Savannah Center at Chappell Crossing. Mark's updated information is listed below.

The Savannah Center at Chappell Crossing
5533 Chappell Crossing Blvd
West Chester, Ohio 45069
513-977-5941
mwallisa@savannahcenter.com

Deane Drury, FCMP has changed his email address to InAnyEvent@windstream.net.

Why doesn't anybody have availability?

By William Baird
Crowne Meetings Director
Dublin, Ohio

In a hurry to book a meeting? Maybe your boss forgot to mention a meeting she's assigned to you, or a last minute client fell into your lap and is looking for a place to have a conference. So you call some venues asking for availability but they just won't seem to give you a direct answer or yes or no. Instead, they bombard you with questions you don't have the answers to, or weren't expecting. Sound familiar? Here are some helpful tips as to the questions your venue might be asking and why.

A lot of the "availability" for an event is going to depend on the amount of revenue the venue thinks your event will bring to them. Notice I said revenue and not size? A group of 400



for lunch typically isn't as appealing as a group of 100 for three days –if they need sleeping rooms as well. Your venue is going to look at the overall revenue of your piece of business. So keep in mind the amount of sleeping rooms, food & beverage, or even the dreaded room rental. The more of each you are bringing to the table, the more likely the doors of availability will open up for you.

The more information you can provide about the event the better off you will be when searching for a location. They will want to know the expected number of people and the room set up configuration. The set up will not only determine what can fit in a

given room, but also pricing. A classroom set is more labor intensive and will cost the location more money to set up than say crescent rounds will, and it will still fit about the same number of people! If you can pull off a short meeting in theater seating, you will have a lot more opportunities, and typically at a lower cost. Don't forget all of the space you'll need for audio visual, and display tables for materials. The space needed for people often isn't all of the space you'll need, and you don't want to find yourself squished for space.

Sleeping rooms are often a key you can use to gain access to availability. Sleeping rooms to venues basically equate to money. Figure out how many rooms and what types you will need. Making sure you have the correct types of rooms is paramount. You don't want to be the person who booked 100 burly men in 50 rooms assuming the rooms all had two beds.

Hands down the best way to find availability for your client is flexibility. If you can be flexible on set ups, space, and most importantly the date, you will always find a home for your meeting. Some venues may not want to book you in the middle of the week, but may be willing to book you on a Friday; or on a date where someone else just cancelled their event. If you don't mind your breakouts in a theater set, make sure you let someone know. They may have rooms that can accommodate your numbers in theater but not classroom.



So gather your information and line up all of your ducks. With these tips and a little negotiation, you'll be able to find a home for whatever event you have, and hopefully impress your boss or client at the same time.



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Online Event Registration Systems

Rules for Purchase: Course 101

By Florence L. May, TRS

Considering the purchase of a new or next generation online registration system? Are you trying to reduce the amount of administrative work in addition to bringing down your printing and mailing costs?

You are likely overwhelmed by the options and you are in good company. Purchasing an online registration system is a major undertaking for three basic reasons:

First, there are more than 200 online event registration systems on the open market and even more in house and custom built solutions. Just try an online search!

Second, these systems vary tremendously in functionality, customizable options and price. You may find apples to apples comparisons a challenge.

And third, event registration requirements vary to a great extent. It is true that no two events are exactly alike. The online registration system that worked perfectly for your small meeting may not work for the large conference.

My company has supported hundreds of major event, tour, meeting and conference planners over the past six (6) years. We've worked with agricultural conferences with livestock attendees, international auto racing with 6 language requirements for volunteers, bird migration tours with 12 viewing platforms and a volunteer management conference with 12 registrant types and 32 educational tracks.

Meeting planners come with such a myriad of requirements that it is no surprise that there is not one registration system that is ideal for everyone.

To assist meeting planners with the assessment process I've developed the **10 Rules to Purchasing Online Event Registration Systems**. This is a compilation of recommendations from my staff and some of our more sophisticated clients.

NOTE: My staff refers to this list as the 10 Items that everyone should consider but very few ask about when buying event registration systems.

RULE ONE: *Evaluate* the pros/cons of your existing registration process and tools.

Ask your clients, customers and internal staff to do a critical review of your process. How do you collect and manage registration information? Is it a customer friendly process? Is your registration process create a smooth administrative management or more work than necessary?

RULE TWO: Define your online registration *criteria*. Your criteria may include the following broad categories or far more specific requirements.

Consider *What you Want vs. What you Require*.

- o Site Building (difficulty level)
- o Registration for Attendees (difficulty level)
- o Usable and Friendly Features
- o Payment Options (Credit Card, Invoice, PO, Check, Payment on Site)
- o Email Package (auto confirmations, custom e-mails, tracking features)
- o Promotional & Survey Tools
- o Levels of Customization (text, graphics, site logic)
- o Sort and Custom Report Selection (do it yourself vs request to technician)



Online Event Registration Systems

Rules for Purchase: Course 101 continued

o Customer Service and Technical Service Responsiveness

o Pricing Variables

RULE THREE: View the **registration system capabilities** of potential vendors first hand.

We highly recommend that you see the capabilities from one of two perspectives. First, an online demo or second, through a live demo with a sales person. You should note that many companies do not put full demos and full functionality on their websites.

RULE FOUR: What **flexibility** will you have in controlling image, text and pricing changes.

Can you make changes to your event registration site without contacting the online registration company? Or do you want to wait for someone else to update your site? Some clients want to pay someone else to update their sites others really desire the control of managing changes themselves.

RULE FIVE: Set a **budget** that matches your criteria and goals.

There are many inexpensive registration option available online but you may find very limited capabilities, reports and support options go with the price. However there may also be un-expectable limitations or levels of support on registration systems at any price point.

RULE SIX: Considerations for linking to an existing or new credit card **payment system**.

If you want to accept credit cards online you will need to link your bank account with a merchant account and gateway to accept payments directly. Check to ensure that your existing merchant account and gateway will link with your registration system.

RULE SEVEN: Review the **communications and marketing** tools that will be available within your online registration product.

Ask yourself what websites, articles and marketing messages will communicate that registration is open. Where will you want to link the registration site?

Also take a close look at the e-communications package. You should be able to e-mail all registrants by activity or individually. Can you e-mail everyone in the system? Can you customize messages? Are confirmations automatically sent?

You may also want an e-mail management system that shows you if e-mail has been sent, opened or bounced.

RULE EIGHT: Know the level of **customer and technical service** you can expect.

Ensure the online registration company has a regular **evaluation process** of both the product and the customer service process.

How often does the company survey its clients? How do they manage requests for product improvement or customer service complaints?

RULE NINE: Make certain that you can define what **type of reports** you will need to run at the pre, during and post event points.

Create a list of the reports you will need with all the items that must be included in each. Don't find out your registration system won't run the report you need at the moment you need it.

RULE TEN: Call multiple **references**.

Ask for references both in your geographic and professional area. Talk to people who have used the prospective registration system for multiple events and over several years if possible.

There are some companies that use different registration systems for different events. Ask the references about any other registration systems they may still use or have tried in the past.

Happy Hunting!

Florence L. May
President
TRS, The Registration System

Are you still using pencil and paper for evaluations?

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Save a Tree and watch your
ROI grow 

Using TurningPoint is more effective & efficient than paper and pencil?

61%	1.	Strongly Agree
33%	2.	Agree
6%	3.	Neutral
0%	4.	Disagree
0%	5.	Strongly Disagree

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