



Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events (T.I.M.E.)

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Welcome

This issue of Tip for Innovative Meetings and Events takes a look at past topics and includes a sampling of additional ideas from newsletters gone by. Often after I write an issue, I come across another interesting perspective that causes me to say, "Gosh, I wish I had read this before I wrote T.I.M.E. " So this is my way of catching up.

So during this holiday season, join me to reflect and look back over some of the ideas and concepts I have shared.

Sue

[Sue Tinnish](#)

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A Look Backward in T.I.M.E.

Rehashing old material hardly seems innovative! Am I losing my touch? Have I come to the end of topics that I can write about?

I had this conversation with myself. But ultimately, I decided that the answer was a vehement "NO". (No I am not experiencing writer's block. No, I haven't come to the end of my idea stream.)

And importantly, I believe there is something extremely valuable in reflection and revisiting. I surprise myself sometimes with the information I have (either stored in my office or in my brain). Sometimes I am too busy to remember what I know or too busy to look through the resources I have available to me.

So in addition to revisiting a few past topics, I invite you to take a philosophical moment to stop, reflect and revisit.

And if now you think I have gone off the Zen deep end, think about this. You can't be strategic, you can't improve, you can't grow without reviewing where you have been.

So onto the past year in review...

First Quarter Review

The Graying of America's Workforce

In February 2003, the topic of T.I.M.E. was Diversity. Say the word "diversity" and most people think multi-cultural or other outward appearances. Diversity has many faces -- religious, sexual preferences, and add this one to your list - Age.

We know that communicating with the Gen Xers and Generation Y requires different strategies. Now, the American workforce is experiencing a graying. Many older Americans are opting to remain in the work force past retirement age. Their motivation -- economic swings that have depleted their retirement funds, living longer, and living healthier lives. Many businesses may be hiring older workers. The statistics convey the necessity:

Between 2000 and 2010

The number of Americans between the ages of 55 and 63 will jump 47.2%

The number between the ages of 25 to 34 will increase 2.8%

The number between the ages of 35 to 45 (usually the management tier in organizations) will drop 13.7%

Managing and communicating in a multi-generational work place is challenging. It requires sensitivity to people's needs, attention spans and preferred learning style.

So be prepared to think about the most effective way to communicate to a wide range of age ranges as you will be seeing people in the workforce past the traditional age of 65!

Caught Up in Your Own Box

March 2003, I took a stab at ideas for improving the Problem Solving elements of your meetings. In several meetings this year where I have challenged participants to think, be creative, solve problems, I have posted the following quotes around the room:

- "Everything that can be invented has been invented." Charles H. Duell, U.S. Commissioner of Patents, 1899
- "Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau." Irving Fisher,

Professor of Economics, Yale University, 1929

- "640K ought to be enough for anybody." Bill Gates, Chairman, Microsoft, 1981
- "The bomb will never go off. I speak as an expert in explosives." Admiral William Leahy, Manhattan Project, 1943
- "I think there is a world market for about five computers." Mr. Thomas Watson, Chairman of IBM, 1943
- "Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?" Harry Warner, Warner Brother Pictures, 1927
- "Heavier than air flying machines are impossible Lord Kelvin, 1895
Hmm....interesting thought as we just celebrated 100 years since the Wright Brothers first flight.
- "There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in their home." Mr. Ken Olsen, president of Digital Equipment Corporation, 1977

I like to remind people that even great thinkers and leaders can get caught in their own box. Another term for our own box is a "frame". Change the size, timeframe, or perspective for how you frame an issue and see your creativity soar.

Second Quarter Highlights

Finding the 'V' (alue) in E N T E R T A I N M E N T

In May, the topic was Entertainment and I included many ideas from the book [The Experience Economy](#).

When budgets are cut, it may be the fun and entertainment line items that are the first to go. Here are some new thoughts on how to justify entertainment for your meetings and events:

- Recharge the batteries. Work environments can be draining today. A fun, shared experience can rejuvenate allowing people to restock their "energy supply" which they need to focus when back on the job.
- People recognize the commitment. Employees, association members and participants all know that its easy to cut entertainment. They recognize that continuing to entertain is an investment -- a vote in confidence -- that their experience, their motivation and that THEY matter.

GE's infamous CEO Jack Welch summed up the importance of cultivating and tapping into human and creative capital when he said, "The soft stuff is the hard stuff."

Wisconsin Meetings (Fall/Winter 2003) published 10 tips for increasing Entertainment ROI. Here are 4 that I especially valued:

1. Include interactivity
2. Celebritize and personalize. People love to see their names in lights
3. Engage the imagination
4. Include a surprise for the collective "aha" moment

You can always email me for the other 6 tips or any references I include in my newsletters. [Sue Tinnish](#)

Bring Me Along

In June, I was confronted with summer, travelling and of course, my daughter being out of school. The topic that month was finding Balance in Meetings.

The June issue focused on incorporating children into meetings. The December issue of Meetings & Conventions had a great overview of the topic of bringing companions to meetings. In the survey, 39% of respondents said that guest attendance has increased because more attendees are combining business and vacation. This was the top reason cited for why guest attendance has increased. The #3 reason, at 28% was that meetings are being held at more family-oriented destinations. And the #5 reason for an increase in attendance was that we now provide child care. Just a blip at 2% of respondents but watch for this trend to grow. The June issue offered great tips for planning for child care and the benefits it offers your company, association and meeting participants.

Third Quarter Comments

Getting More Mobile

I was in Maine in July thinking about how what lessons to learn from mobile meetings for mainstream meetings. The issue focused on Mobile Events -- a few how to's, lots of reasons why, and ideas on what to learn from this form of event marketing.

In the July issue, I wrote about types of meetings and events that could benefit from going mobile. Many see the expense and logistical challenges as clearly outweighed by the one-to-one communication that is possible in road shows. I love this example of IBM who launched a road show for its storage division in October. On Day 1 the sales force received in depth training. On Day 2, a half day program is held for current and potential customers with the sales rep. That's leveraging the time and effort put into a road show. And IBM insures that they can justify the road show through the collection of great information -- the topic of the November issue. All leads are funneled from the seminars to its sales force and the company eliminates the chance for any oversight by having an outside source follow-up 30 days later to make sure an IBM rep has made contact. Sixty days after that all attendees are surveyed about the quality of the seminar. This information is used for planning future road shows.

Another company, software maker SAP, likes mobile marketing because it creates more excitement to its trade marketing efforts. SAP found that road shows created more panache with a more consumer-like appeal (even when selling B2B -- business to business -- you are still selling to people). They use their "New Economy" trailer for sales pitches, government events, and investor relations meetings. 10,000 customers "experienced" The New Economy turning into 6,200 qualified leads.

What I like about this example is that SAP has created an "experience" that I also wrote about in the May issue on Entertainment.

Our ROI affects other ROI

Tips for Innovative Meetings in September focused on training meetings. The litmus test for seemingly every project and meeting is ROI. What is the ROI? In 1to1 Magazine each issue is filled with examples of successful and less than successful Customer Relationship Management strategies. As companies spend thousands/millions of dollars on various CRM systems, what is the number 1 reason these companies don't realize the ROI of these systems -- Training. Companies fail to plan, budget or allow sufficient time for training.

Peter Hawes writes in 1to1 about importance of creating cultural shifts as part of Hewlett-Packard's CRM strategy. Senior management was on board with the CRM strategy. The troops saw the need for the tools. The problem was middle management was in "permafrost" which prevented them from making the cultural change necessary for the success of the entire CRM initiative. HP's solution -- a training program aimed at the folks caught in the "permafrost".

Your meetings are part of an overall company strategy and business plan. Whether the meeting is a training meeting or part of a launch or something different, the meeting is a key component of the larger effort. Find your ROI in the larger ROI.

Meetings can accomplish things memos can't.

Finishing off the Year

School Colors

In October, I didn't propose Haunted Houses as a potential Unusual Venue. But T.I.M.E. that month discussed the benefits of local color, local tradition and unusual venues.

One of the unusual venues included on the list was Universities. I didn't have room to expand on this idea during the issue. Universities offer a different play on the usual meeting. They offer:

- A great variety of space including classrooms, lecture halls, theaters, auditoriums, art galleries, grand ballrooms, conference space, and large arenas.
- Competitive pricing

- Accessibility (typically) by air and various ground routes
- Top technology
- Psychological edge as a serious setting for the meeting

There is something invigorating about being on a college campus. Facilities and options are like a multiple-choice test, so this venue choice may work for you.

Tracking to the "T"

I pushed the value of Information and Number Crunching in November.

What happens in manufacturing leads to changes in the way service businesses are organized and managed.

The successor to UPC codes (those zebra like labels on everything you buy) is considered the RFID radio frequency transmitters. I think it will be an interesting development to watch to see where it grows from retailers and inventory management. Right now the hospitality industry is working through APEX to develop standards for information. With standards, information can flow seamlessly and freely between two organizations.

In the retail world, RFID will cause some interesting waves as it is implemented. Instead of only carrying price information from a UPC code, RFID have far more data ranging from price to inventory. Wal-Mart will require its top 100 suppliers to include RFID tags on all cases and pallets by 2005. The tags could revolutionize supply chain management allowing the retailer to track goods from the factory through its warehouses and throughout thousands of retail outlets.

Ultimately if RFID tags are on individual products they can be tracked down to the consumer. Dan Mullen, CEO of the Association for Automatic Identification and Data Capture Technologies, calls it, "A database that travels with the product." Once the product and the tags reach the consumer and the end of the supply chain, the promotional possibilities kick in!

New Year's Resolutions

Next year, I am resolved to:

Publish Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events more in the middle of the month. Watch for it to appear earlier in the month or take me to task for not keeping my resolutions.

Finish writing my book. I am in the process of writing a How To book on increasing the productivity of meetings through better communication strategies. The base of literature in existence on meeting productivity addresses basic issues (start your meeting on time, be sure there is a need for a meeting). My creation (tentatively titled Meetings with Muscle) will delve deeper by suggesting ideas, strategies, and tips for

improving the very core of the meeting -- the content.

If you have any contributions or are willing to preview parts of the book, I would love to include you on the team! Please email me and offer your suggestions.

Have a great holiday season. I will be back -- in the middle of the month -- in January 2004!

Future T.I.M.E.

Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events will be accepting limited advertising. If you are interested in using this e-newsletter as a way to reach a targeted audience, please e-mail Ron Hopkins at rchopkins@ameritech.net for more details. [Or Click Here](#)

I'd love to work with you on creating more interaction for your meeting or event. Please contact me: Sue Tinnish, SEAL Inc., Telephone: 847.394.9857, E-mail: stinnish@ameritech.net or click here [Contact Sue](#)

In the meantime, I would really appreciate it if you would forward T.I.M.E. onto your colleagues, associates, and clients. Just press the forward button.

T.I.M.E. Gone By

If you are interested in past issues, please e-mail us with the month and topic and we will send you a copy of that newsletter. Here's what is included in past issues [Back Issue Request](#):

May 2000: [Teambuilding](#) and (Freebie) New York Times Reprint On Teambuilding

June 2000: [Green Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Resource List Of Exercises

July 2000: [Values](#) and (Freebie) Meeting Analysis

August 2000: [Minimum/Minimal Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Web Winners

October 2000: [Evaluations](#) and (Freebie) Sample Evaluation Questions

November 2000: [Politics](#)

December 2000: [Toys](#) and (Freebie) Brainstorming Ideas

January 2001: [Sales, Award Presentations](#) and (Freebie) Sales Tips

February 2001: [Change](#) and Communicating Change and (Freebie) Change Bombs

March 2001: [Open Space Technology](#)

April 2001: [Adult Learning Styles](#) and (Freebie) Learning Style Questionnaire

May 2001: [Trade Shows](#) and (Freebie) Trade Show Timeline

June 2001: [Emotional Intelligence](#) and (Freebie) EI Quiz

July 2001: [Presentation Tips](#) and (Freebie) Speaker Introductions

August 2001: [Ice Breakers](#) and (Freebie) Resource List

September 2001: [Facilitation](#) and (Freebie) Problem Personalities In A Meeting

October 2001: [Humor](#) and (Freebie) The Benefits Of Laughter

November 2001: [Customer Care](#) and (Freebie) Complaints

December 2001: [Slack](#) and (Freebie) Quiet Time

January 2002: [Teambuilding Options](#) and (Freebie)

February 2002: [Promotional Products](#) and (Freebie) Case Study

March 2002: [Multicultural Communication](#) and (Freebie) Multicultural Meeting Tips

April 2002: [Outdoor Learning](#) and (Freebie) Justification Checklist

May 2002: [Budgets, ROI, ROO, and ROK](#) and (Freebie) Budgeting Beyond Excel
June 2002: [Creativity](#) and (Freebie) Building the Case for Creativity
July 2002: [High Touch Technology](#) and (Freebie) Personal Technology Tools
August 2002: [Economic and Business Cycles](#) and (Freebie) Investment Strategies for meetings
September 2002: [Successful Environmental Factors/Conference Centers](#) and (Freebie) Learning Environments
October 2002: [Return on Investment](#) and (Freebie) Balanced Scorecard

January 2003: [Everyday Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Meeting Quiz
February 2003: [Diversity](#) and (Freebie) Survey Results
March 2003: [Problem Solving](#) and (Freebie) Techniques Illustrated
April 2003: [Marketing: Pre- and Post- Event](#) and (Freebie) Blogs
May 2003: [Entertainment](#) and (Freebie) Storytelling
June 2003: [Balance in Meetings](#) and child caret with (Freebie) Child Care at Meetings Tips
July 2003: [Mobile Events](#) with (Freebie) Sponsorship
August 2003: [Last Minute Ideas](#) with (Freebie) Audience Participation
September 2003: [Training Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Kirkpatrick Challenge
October 2003: [Unique Venues](#) with (Freebie) Experiential Checklist
November 2003: [Data, Information and Number Crunching](#) with (freebie) European Privacy

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