



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

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Topic: Deja View III

Date: December 2005

Written and Published by Sue Tinnish, 847.394.9857, stinnish@ameritech.net

U. S. Library of Congress ISSN: 1539-1833

Welcome

It's December and I have traditionally used this issue to revisit topics from the past issues. Every year it seems after I have "visited" a topic, I see, read, or experience things that cause me to reflect, expand, refine or even change my mind.

So during this busy time of the year, take a moment to look back with me. Read and enjoy a moment of quiet while I take a retrospective look at the topics of:

Ways to increase your credibility
— Food trends —
Careful speech
Sarbanes-Oxley
Teambuilding
Participation
Emotional Meetings
Travel

There are many reasons to celebrate at this time of year; find one that suits your needs and Happy Holidays. I will be back in 2006.

Sue

[Sue Tinnish](#)

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How did those Resolutions Fare?

In my January issue, I advocated several ideas for good business resolutions during the new year. Now that it is the end of the year, perhaps you are considering ways to "better" yourself in the coming year.

If you are frustrated by the lack of attention, respect or value you receive within your organization, take the advice handed out by the consulting firm McKinsey. (The advice was directed toward Chief Marketing Officers - a should-be C-level job within a company that one would assume commands some respect...)

The McKinsey Quarterly report surveyed top corporate executives and found that many view their own chief marketing officers with suspicion.

"More than half of those interviewed were underwhelmed by their marketers' analytical skills and business acumen," says Anthony Freeling, an alumnus of McKinsey's London office and coauthor of the article "A Credibility Gap for Marketers." "And nearly every CEO expressed some variation on the concern that marketers, in spite of their creative strengths, don't think like businessmen, and display behavior that in the words of one CEO is more akin to a recalcitrant child than an adult," he says.

What can you and other "soft skills" professionals do to improve your reputations? Think like a businessperson by:

- Embracing numbers. Measure and track. Provide tangible results. Highlight areas of your work that are qualitative and track-able.
- Building processes and managing the process. Enlist others for your team. Management will perceive you better if you are seen not as a person who can do it all but as a person who can manage the process (and others) for getting it all done.
- Focus on improving one or two things in the coming year. Focus on elements that will have the most impact on the company or organization.

(Source: SMM's Performance Newsletter June 13, 2005)

To read the January 2005 issue click here: [January 2005 T.I.M.E.](#)

Food from February

In February I wrote an issue on the Brainy side of F&B (Food and Beverage). Here's my deja view on food at meetings.

What happens in the consumer market will affect meetings. Watch consumer trends to see what will happen in meetings.

And what is happening in the local grocery store?

First trend, organics are gaining momentum and market share. Organics sales are expected to grow about 21% a year and hit \$30 billion in 2007, projects the Organic Trade Association. Last year, organic food and beverage sales hit \$10.9 billion, up 18%, reports the Natural Marketing Institute.

(Source: PROMO Xtra, June 2, 2005)

Awareness will continue to grow. During 2005, twenty-one organic brands launched a seven-month tour to reach 3 million mainstream consumers at festivals and fairs. This is the second year for the ONE Tour 2005 (ONE stands for "Organic and Natural Experience"), which had seven brand sponsors last year. ONE Tour 2005 piggybacked 24 events in 14 markets, such as Taste of Atlanta, Bite of Seattle and Boston Harbor fest.

Brands are rolling out new products:

- ConAgra will launch Hunt's Organic canned tomatoes
- Orville Redenbacher brand adds organic microwave popcorn
- Campbell adds organic items to its V-8, Pace, Prego and Swanson brands

(Source of tour information, PROMO Xtra, Apr 19, 2005)

Second trend is the additional branding of a product within another food product. This trend builds upon what Intel did with computer chips by promoting "Intel Inside" when shopping for a computer. A recent holiday example: Pillsbury Cookies with Hershey Mini-kisses inside. Two distinct companies; joint branding.

Consumers and your meeting participants will recognize and want specific branding related to food items. Free range chickens are just the beginning. Already the Oregon Convent Center in Portland offers menus based on locally grown ingredients.

A caveat about food choices - Communicate clearly and specifically about what you want. Define terms as there are different interpretations between words like locally grown, organic and sustainable. Finally, start planning early, as demand increases, the need for forethought also increases.

To read the February 2005 issue click here: [February 2005 T.I.M.E.](#)

Putting Your Foot in your SOX

During the March 2005 issue I wrote about press conferences. Also this past year, I took a look at the Sarbanes Oxley legislation and discussed the impact on meetings.

I am of the strong opinion that honest, transparent communication is the best. Reading a recent article entitled The Speech Trap by Dave Zielinski in the August 2005 issue of Presentations Magazine gave me pause and started me really thinking....

The article is not available on-line and while respecting Mr. Zielinski's intellectual property (see the November issue of TIME), I want to summarize his salient points. My interpretation of what Zielinski wrote is that people involved in meetings need to be certain that presenters not only do not put their foot in their mouth but also that they avoid any legal entanglements.

Blurring of the lines between Free Speech and Commercial Speech

Securities laws and the courts have already put new restrictions on companies' First Amendment rights of free speech. Companies and their spokespeople can be held legally liable for information shared with co-workers, customers, investors or other audiences, in speech or in writing.

Who this affects:

- Corporate communication staff
- Public relations staff
- Spokespeople
- Investor-relations managers
- Salespeople
- Presenters
- Executives
- Speechwriters
- Everyone involved in gatherings of people where information is shared – namely, meetings

What Applies?

- Presentations
- Web conferences
- Pitching a product
- Discussing company strategy
- Speaking at an industry conferences
- Press releases
- Phone calls

Especially be cautious when discussing topics like employment practices, consumer privacy rights, financial results, and taxes.

Why?

Here's the precedent set by our legal system: In a 2003 court case called Nike v. Kasky, a group of labor unions charged that Nike was engaged in unfair labor practices in its overseas factories. In response, Nike conducted an independent study of those practices. The results released in a series of press releases, op-ed letters and public presentations stated the company was doing a good job but could do better.

Later, Mark Kasky, a consumer activist in California, filed a lawsuit against Nike alleging its information campaign amounted to "false and deceptive" advertising under a state statute. The California Supreme Court ruled in favor of Kasky, arguing that since Nike's public statements about its operations might persuade consumers to buy its products, Nike's communication should be treated as commercial advertising. As commercial advertising it was not privy to the same First Amendment protections as most ordinary speech.

The court case was settled and the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case, thereby ensuring that the legal questions raised by the case were not adequately addressed.

In addition, new securities laws regulate how companies can communicate financial information to audiences. In October 2000 the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) enacted the Regulation Fair Disclosure (FD) rule to level the investment playing field by eliminating the problem of selective disclosure. Prior to this law, groups such as Wall Street analysts or large institutional investors would receive access to key investment information before others. Now, when the leaders of public companies communicate "material, non-public" information to groups such as portfolio managers, they must also simultaneously disclose the information to the public at large.

What to do (or my Cautions for Meetings):

- Be careful if presenters tailor content for different audiences. While a best practice among speakers, a presenter must insure that no "material" information is left out as they customize content.
- Provide good sources of information for sales people during sales meetings, product launches, etc. Ensure that sales people present all information to customers and prospects. One particularly vulnerable area is product-safety data. House this information in a centralized, secure place like a company intranet so salespeople can easily access it and have confidence it's accurate and current.
- Don't disclose financial information internally without first putting it in a press release and distributing it via the proper channels.
- Anyone speaking for a public company must know with extreme clarity what information they can safely disclose to whom.
- Public companies need well-coordinated strategies for simultaneously communicating material information to different channels and audiences. Many companies now rely on Web casting for analyst meetings or investor conferences, partly because beaming these presentations out to anyone with Internet access satisfies the SEC requirement for avoiding exclusivity in conveying financial information.
- Script carefully. Avoid slip-ups during unscripted presentations or conference calls with analysts, reporters and others. The Securities Exchange Commission would consider it a big No-No, if an executive mentions a big new sales contract to one group that hasn't yet been announced publicly.

The Future?

All presenters will find themselves balancing the need for greater specificity and transparency and the knowledge that outside sources may be watching - waiting for slips-ups or regulatory breaches.

Though no one has been prosecuted in the two years since Nike vs. Kasky, some people, like Zielinski, report that the Nike decision has decreased organizations' willingness to communicate as freely with external audiences as they did before.

Dave Zielinski's article was originally published in the August 2005 issue of Presentations magazine. This is a great magazine and worth reading for its monthly tips on presentations, PowerPoint tips and equipment updates.

To read the March 2005 issue on Managing the Press click here: [March 2005 T.I.M.E.](#)

Susan Friedman wrote a great read for trade show media. Published in the August issue of Successful Meetings it also appears at this website: <http://www.zeromillion.com/marketing/effective-media-marketing.html>

Second SOX

When New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer targets an area or a company, watch out. Insurance companies, like Marsh & McLennan Companies, were targeted for their unreported commissions

and bid-rigging in selling commercial lines of insurance. Insurance planners may now have a new wrinkle in their planning.

Spitzer recently has criticized trips and fees paid to insurance agents. Adding to the controversy, Consumer Reports magazine recently reported, "Consumers may also be overpaying for insurance purchased through independent insurance brokerages. Investigators want to know whether agents receive extra commissions for steering business to a particular insurer." (First read in Guilty by Association, Successful Meetings Christopher Hosford June 1, 2005)

Possible outcomes might include that incentive trips will be outlawed completely as an illegal form of anti-competitive, under-the-table kickback. A second scenario is that a combination of industry self-regulation and regulatory guidance will require greater disclosure to customers about incentives. Planners then will still be able to plan incentive trips, but also will be asked to create training meetings to educate agents.

Hearings continued in November in the Oversight Hearing on Insurance Brokerage Practices, Including Potential Conflicts of Interest and the Adequacy of the Current Regulatory Framework. Stay tuned for more...

To read the March 2005 issue on Sarbanes-Oxley click here: [March 2005 T.I.M.E.](#)

Why Teambuilding Matters

Even though I am biased and make a living creating and delivering teambuilding experiences, I am not the only one who believes that teambuilding is important. I devoted the May issue (my 5th Anniversary of Tips to Innovative Meetings and Events) to the topic,

Turnover costs (people leaving their job) are estimated at \$140 billion annually, and turnover rates are 17.5 percent less at work sites where employees feel supported by their organizations, says Theresa Cherry of Odyssey Experiences, a training, teambuilding, and leadership adventure company.

Take advantage of time on the agenda to really execute teambuilding. Advice for teambuilding:

- Once is not enough. Certainly, a teambuilding event can jumpstart a team or begin to build skills. However, the meeting experience of the teambuilding must be reinforced when everyone return to their jobs.
- It's a continuum. Teambuilding can be social and fun or it can work to build skills or even change behavior. Decide where you want to be on the continuum and plan accordingly. If you want to have fun and create a social experience, then beach Olympics, bowling or a scavenger hunt will work great. If you want to focus on problem solving skills, leadership, building trust, or have people begin to examine their own behavior on a team, then the activity must be integrated with some discussion, debrief or reflection allowing people to make the connection between what happened during the teambuilding and what it means to them in their organizational life.
- Differentiate between groups. While it is important to understand the demographics of the group, it is also critical to understand how the team operates as a team. Are they a:
 - Newly formed team
 - Well-functioning team
 - Dysfunctional team
 - Virtual team that will dissolve after this project
 - Intact work group that will work together for a long team

- Team of peers
- Team with leaders and a hierarchy

All these group dynamics impact how to direct the teambuilding effort and an understanding will help the teambuilding experience be even stronger.

- Know what you want. What are you looking to achieve through the teambuilding? Are you seeking skill development? A change in attitude? New motivation? How people feel about themselves, their work and their teammates?

There was a fabulous article in Corporate Meetings & Incentives, May 1, 2005 entitled "Teambuilding Reveals Its Serious Side" by Andrea Graham. For more on great teambuilding read this article still available online at:

http://meetingsnet.com/incentives/motivation/meetings_teaching_reveals_serious/ and also see my Freebies section. Or if you missed this year's issue on teambuilding click here: [May 2005 T.I.M.E.](#)

Ride the Participation Revolution

In January 2004, the topic was branding. Meetings are opportunities to extend an organization's branding.

Betsy Spethmann wrote an article entitled The Rise of Culture Marketing in the March 8, 2005 issue of PROMO Xtra. Betsy was reporting on the IEG Event Marketing Conference held in Chicago. Her thoughts on branding have some important ideas for meetings.

Pine and Gilmore coined the phrase, "The Experience Economy." At the IEG Event Marketing Conference, futurist Andrew Zollitold conferees that consumers have become participants, controlling their interactions with brands and marketing messages (think TiVo). Meanwhile, marketing has evolved from selling commodities to products, then services, then experiences. Next up: a culture economy, where brands fit consumers' perspective on society at large.

"The relationship between brands and society will be a major opportunity and chafing point for the next century," said Zollit, founder of New York-based think tank Z + Partners. "People deeply resist the idea that they're merely consumers. They are participants—and what's more, they are in control."

What does this mean for meetings?

- Interweave branding and content. Sponsorship can take on a new role to enhance consumer experiences.
- Strike a balance between broadcast, where the message is aired and conversation, where culture happens.
- Involve your attendees prior to your meeting; make them participants not observers.

To read the January 2004 issue click here: [January 2004 T.I.M.E.](#)

Read on for Seth Godin's wisdom on meetings that are related to the participation revolution.

Purple Cows and Emotional Meetings

Seth Godin, an author (7 books including Purple Cow), entrepreneur and change agent says, "Facts don't change people's behavior. Emotion changes people's behavior. Stories and irrational impulses are what change behavior. Not facts or bullet points... Human beings are irrational." On the Meetings & Conventions blog in November, a thread appeared about making meetings more emotional. A post stated that Seth Godin feels many conferences fail to inspire people to change their behavior because, in trying to reach the "average" attendee, they rely on just teaching the facts.

Wish I would have had that quote when I wrote my issue on Emotional Meetings (June). What emotional meetings do:

1. Godin says they reach the irrational side of all humans.
2. Adult education theory supports the fact that what your attendees care about sticks with them.
3. Emotion gives participants the reason to take action based on what they learn, because it'll make them feel better.
4. It takes a risk and gives up some control to the participants. It helps the content be more specific and meaningful.

Hope you didn't miss the June issue on emotional meetings, click here if you want it re-sent to you: [June 2005 T.I.M.E.](#)

The Travel Experience

Whether it's you or your meeting participants, some of us are true road warriors logging the frequent flyer miles. This news will be of interest to frequent travelers.

In October, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) ended the 14-month Registered Traveler Program (RT), which expedited security screenings at five major airports for passengers who had gone through rigorous background checks.

The TSA reports that the pilots were a success. They concluded because they achieved their primary goal of generating data about how RT can enhance security and customer service. Through this initial pilot program, TSA generated valuable data and insights concerning the viability of using security assessments and biometric-based identity verification technology in the airport environment – and how that allowed for an expedited security screening process for program participants.

In 2006, TSA will work with interested airports, the travel industry and vendors to begin operating a Registered Traveler program nationwide. TSA will issue guidance to the industry regarding which biometrics to collect and how to store them on RT cards and announce program benefits for RT participants. Additionally, TSA will select a third party entity to certify service providers and manage compliance and establish requirements for airport checkpoint verification providers.

The nationwide Registered Traveler will be up and running in summer 2006.

In October 2004, the issue focused on how the "travel experience" - good or bad - can impact your meeting attendees. Being aware of developments in the travel world are important to executing innovative meetings. To read the October 2004 issue click here: [Oct 2004 Travel T.I.M.E.](#)

Freebies: Holiday Trivia

Freebies

The average American takes six months to pay off holiday credit-card bills.

Pogonophobia is the fear of beards.

December is the most popular month for nose jobs.

Average wage of a mall Santa: \$11 an hour. With real beard: \$20.

To deliver his gifts in one night, Santa would have to make 822.6 visits per second, sleighing at 3,000 times the speed of sound. At that speed, Santa and his reindeer would burst into flame instantaneously. Ahh, I wish I still had a "believer" in my home.

Happy Holidays!

More Freebies: Get more out of your teambuilding. Create specific and measurable objectives with my list of potential outcomes from a teambuilding event. [Sue Tinnish](#)

Future T.I.M.E.

Give me a present of a referral. Send my newsletter onto 2 or 3 people this month. I would really appreciate it if you would forward T.I.M.E. onto your colleagues, associates, and clients. Just press the forward button at the end of the newsletter.

Also consider filling my calendar with your meetings or events. I am available to facilitate, create teambuilding, or consult on aspects of your meetings and events.

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
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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
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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
December 2003: [Deja View](#)

January 2004: [Branding](#) with (Freebie) Identity vs. Brand
February 2004: [Audio Visuals](#) with (Freebie) Speaker Guidelines
March 2004: [Networking](#) with (Freebie) Networking Ideas
April 2004: [Strategic Budgeting](#) with (Freebie) Budgeting Ideas
May 2004: [Sensory Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Music's Impact
June 2004: [Board Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Litmus Test
July 2004: [Leadership](#) with (Freebie) Best Meeting Leadership Behaviors
August 2004: [Barrier-free Meetings](#) with (Freebie) Avoiding the Digital Divide
September 2004: [Time Management & Meetings](#) with (Freebie) More Timely Tips
October 2004: [The Travel Experience & Stress](#) with (Freebie) International Travel Tips
November 2004: [Voting Techniques](#) with (Freebie) Political Pitfalls
December 2004: [Deja View II](#)

January 2005: [New Year's Resolutions](#) with (Freebie) Best Business Books
February 2005: [Brainy Side of F&B](#) with (Freebie) Cooking Metaphors for Meetings
March 2005: [Sarbanes-Oxley and Meetings](#)
April 2005: [Visual Aids](#) and (Freebie) PowerPoint Countdown

May 2005: [Experiential Teambuilding](#) and (Freebie) Template
June 2005: [Emotional Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Experiential Teambuilding Template
July 2005: [Press Conferences](#) and (Freebie) PR Books
August 2005: [Green Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Eco-travel Websites
September 2005: [International Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Multicultural resources
November 2005: [Copyright Laws](#) and (Freebie) Free Articles You can Publish/Reprint

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