

Making Cents

152+ Ways to Stretch Your Planning Dollars

What do you do when you have higher expectations and lower budgets than you did last year? Find out how the experts get the biggest bang for their buck. PYM asked industry professionals to send in their budget tips on everything from Audio/Visual to Transportation. Here's the fruit of their collective wisdom, compiled in this keepsake guide.

Best Practices

1. Know your group's history and the value of your business. Use the history to determine guarantees. BW
2. Always have a budget or a target maximum \$ spend in mind. SF
3. Find out what the client's priorities are and invest the money in one WOW area. CL
4. Be flexible. If you can go with different dates, you may be able to get everything you want at the price you need. CL
5. Ask questions about the proposals you receive. For example, if you don't understand all the items listed on your A/V estimate, ask for an explanation of the charges. If something is unnecessary, have them remove it. You need to be able to defend all of the charges to your boss, so be aware of what you're asking them to pay for. TrS
6. Always, always, always review and negotiate your contracts before signing them – that's half the battle. CL
7. Review your master account bill daily. Limit authorized signatures. Discuss with vendors the possibility of getting a discount if a major portion of the bill is paid on-site. BW
8. Go to the site and meet the manager personally. A \$300 plane ticket is nothing compared to saving thousands on your event. DS
9. During site selections, also schedule tastings, investigate transportation options and meet potential local entertainment/speakers. You may not have the time or money for a second trip. PYM
10. Go green – use eco-friendly concepts to help the environment and save on expenses like paper, binders, water bottles, etc. DTS, MS
11. If it will save you time and money, consider outsourcing aspects of the planning process. BW, DTS
12. The people in Procurement, Purchasing, Legal and Accounting are your friends. They'll negotiate side-by-side with you and for you. Engage them and make them part of your team. AS
13. Contact the local convention and visitors bureau. They offer a variety services that can save you time and money, from site tours and activity planning to free maps, goodie bag items and other amenities. PYM
14. Negotiate multi-year deals. Signing long-term agreements with contractors and vendors can save you money over time. SH

Keeping a line item budget is essential. For sample Budget Templates, consult "The Event Marketing Handbook" or do a Google search. AS, PYM

Conduct an internal and external eco-audit to determine current usage of energy, water consumption, F&B and carbon emissions generated, etc., and how much money green initiatives could save (or have saved) your company. LW

15. Work with preferred vendors over and over again. Many vendors – florists, décor, props, catering, transportation and A/V – will extend a planner discount (10-20 percent) once you have worked with them on a certain number of events. Once you have a good working relationship, they also are more likely to go the extra mile for you. SB
16. If a vendor has regional offices, see if you can get a volume discount if you work with them on multiple events around the country. BW, SF
17. Find out what groups are meeting in the same venue before you, and see if you can piggyback off of any of their set-ups or services. For example, if they are using the same A/V provider or decorator, you may be able to work out a situation where they leave certain room sets, staging or pipe and drape for your event, and you foot the bill for tear-down. SH, KS, SK
18. After the event, donate unused food, supplies, goodie bags or bottled water, etc. That will reduce fees for shipping or waste disposal, provide your organization with a charitable tax deduction and help local non-profits reduce their expenses. PYM
19. Maximize technology. Use digital event planning tools that can save time, money and resources. If attendees don't need to physically meet face to face, use virtual meetings,

Time-saving event management software is available through apexsolution.org, cvent.com, viewpath.com and iventra.com, among others. A couple of cool options for virtual meetings include **CineMeetings & Events**, which brings Web conferencing to movie theaters, and **Virtualis Convention & Learning Center**, a virtual convention center in Second Life that is operated by meeting planners. DF, PYM

teleconferencing and Web conferencing to bring far-flung people together. DF, PYM

“Even though gratuities are included, I always give tips to banquet, sales and A/V managers. Word gets around, and a few bucks go a long way. They remember that my group tips, and it comes back in so many ways.”
 – Yvette Segarra, *Manager of Special Events, New Jersey Credit Union League*

20. Create strong relationships in every category with your external vendors, contractors and suppliers and you will yield even healthier results. (Remember the old adage, “You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours?”) AS, MO
21. Just because you’ve been given a budget doesn’t mean you need to spend every dime. The biggest WOW factor is coming in under budget and the ability to work with any size budget. Clients consistently rebook if you save them money. AR

Audio/Visual

22. Going multi-media gives you the best value and impact for your money. For example, music adds energy and excitement to meetings. Embedding YouTube videos into PowerPoint presentations helps shake up dull presentations. DF
23. Rent equipment, such as a fax machine or copier, if you anticipate heavy usage. BW
24. If you want to go with the in-house A/V service, request a 20 percent reduction in cost off their quote. RW
25. It may be more cost-effective to bring in an outside company for your A/V needs. Outside companies have larger inventories, which give planners more options. Going outside also reduces the amount paid in additional hotel tax and gratuity charges, which are calculated from the total in-house spend. JJ, MSL

26. Purchase power cords and LCD projectors so you can pay a set-up fee rather than a daily rental charge. Encourage clients to buy these items – it will save thousands of dollars, plus offer the company a tax deduction. AR, YS, SF
27. Pare down breakouts to minimal staging. Keep speakers with the same needs in the same room for consecutive sessions so you pay per-day for the screen, mics, etc., not per session. SF, YS
28. Use a production company that does everything so you can avoid going to five or six vendors for your A/V, staging, décor, entertainment, and so on. You'll save money and be able to create a more cohesive environment. MS, EC
29. Look at tear-down costs. Some A/V companies will try to charge the same labor fees for tear-downs as they do for set-ups. Tearing down an event typically takes about half the time, so the fees should be about half, or no more than three-quarters, of what set-up charges are. SH

Dates and Destinations

30. Pick value season/holiday/off-peak days of the week/promotional “hot dates.” Ask the catering departments for the “hot dates” menus; they are definitely blue light specials. BW, KP
31. Deals can always be found, even in top-tier cities, by being flexible on dates and patterns. By filling holes in a facility’s calendar, planners get more negotiating leverage. Rates are typically higher over the weekend than they are during the week. SH

Underdog destinations have to be more creative to attract business. As a result, some offer truly innovative amenities, like cultural immersion programs, for attendees. PYM

32. Negotiating favorable exchange rates or asking for guaranteed dollar pricing for international conferences can save thousands of dollars. DF, BW

33. Meet centrally or near an airport. You'll have less transportation expenses and it's easier to get people out on evening flights after the final session, thus avoiding one more hotel night. SF

34. Check out second and third tier cities. Some, like Milwaukee, offer truly first-tier amenities without the price tag (or attitude) of better-known destinations. You'll typically find more hotel availability, better room rates and more room to negotiate amenities for your group. Plus, service tends to be better in cities hungry for your business. SH, PYM

35. Use universities or other public facilities such as libraries, parks, botanical gardens and museums. Most allow you to bring in your own caterers and vendors. SH
36. Try to work with a full-service venue – one that offers in-house catering, staff, A/V, parking, décor, et al – rather than with multiple vendors. SB
37. People don't often think of cruise ships as full-service venues, but they are – and pricing often is all-inclusive. Not only can you design the full experience you want within the price point you need, if you have a large enough group, you also can dictate the itinerary. PYM

Décor

38. The biggest WOW factor on a budget is having a theme (elegant, eco-friendly, Hollywood, sports, etc.). It can be extremely simple, but be sure to repeat that theme so it doesn't get missed. Simple flowers or centerpieces, tons of candles, house linens, low lighting, custom menus and a great music mix on an iPod can make you look like a star. SF, JB

- 39. Think about going monochromatic. For example, consider using red floral, red linen, red lighting, a red specialty beverage, a band dressed in red, and more. For the ultimate in décor savings, invite all your guests to dress in red. SK
- 40. Focus décor spending on the areas where the guests' focus will be, like the entrance and the stage. BJ
- 41. Why spend tons of money on centerpieces that end up in the trash afterwards? Use giveaways that fit the theme – for example, if you're planning a book launch, display/stack the books in an interesting way to create the centerpiece. You've saved money, and the attendees can take them home. ACS/JL
- 42. Instead of spending money on a centerpiece, use a lazy Susan, which will encourage conversations. BW
- 43. Do it yourself. Simple votive candles can be purchased at 99-cent stores and garnished with a few fresh flowers. Balloons are inexpensive and festive decorations. Try assembling three glass cylinders of different heights, filling them with water and adding three drops of food coloring and a floating candle. Or fill the cylinders with colored beads. Instead of using expensive overlays, give the table color by using two runners. NO, SS

Partyvision.com offers event novelties like oxygen bars and photo cookies. [Event Furniture](http://EventFurniture.com) makes rooms pop with comfortable, chic décor. ACS/JL

Here's another book display idea sure to spark conversation. Before the event, ask attendees to e-mail you the name of the book that's helped them the most in the past year. Contact the publisher's publicist for each of the top 10 titles and ask if they can send five copies you can display throughout the event. By each display, put a card listing the names of the people who recommended them. Raffle or auction the books off. After the event, distribute the complete list of recommended titles to all attendees. KA

- 44. Select a hotel that has more than one linen selection. Coordinate the centerpiece colors to the linens rather than bringing in custom linens. SF, JB
- 45. Use the hotel's in-house props, gobos and décor, which often are free. RW, TS, YS
- 46. Candles are the most cost-effective way to create a dramatic atmosphere. SK, SF
- 47. Use lighting to enhance a room instead of props or fabric coverings. Wall washes, stage washes and even gobos can make a big impact for a relatively low investment. Up lighting can dress up a drab room with color or make a high-ceilinged space less cavernous. Logos can be projected as well. BJ, SF, SG, YS, KS, HTB, SS
- 48. Some of the new "green" LED lights eliminate the need for bulky cabling and power distribution because several can plug into a typical wall outlet without overloading the circuit breaker. BJ
- 49. Use the same room for the general session and the gala, using the stage only once. SF
- 50. Reuse centerpieces throughout the event.

Order cookies with customized messages from fancyfortunecookies.com or thechocolateorchard.com. SchottChocolatelmages.com can provide custom-branded chocolate party favors or chocolate photo booths. ACS/JL, PYM

Use your décor to spruce up receptions, buffet lines, registration desks and stage for no extra cost. CL, MS, SF

- 51. Try using rental items for centerpieces instead of florals. SG
- 52. By using an outdoor venue, you minimize décor needs. SH
- 53. Many florists will lower your fees if you work with them to donate the flowers from your event to a local charity or hospital. Bonus: The donation is tax-deductible. MO

Entertainment & Speakers

- 54. Contact local schools about booking student entertainers in exchange for a donation. BW, SH, SG, BJ
- 55. If you have a good relationship with a production company, they may be able to negotiate speaker and entertainment fees on your behalf. JB
- 56. Book celebrity impersonators for meet and greets instead of pursuing the real thing. JB
- 57. Remember, a great keyboard player can sound like a full orchestra. Instead of seven musicians, you can settle for three or use a DJ. JB

More than 500 rental companies list their inventories on us.zilok.com and its European sister site. Key in what you're looking for and the city to get lists of what's available and the per-day cost. PYM

More care needs to be taken with evaluating student entertainers' sound, look and conduct, but advance communications will help with this. Find bands that have performed at campus-wide events; they already have been through some vetting process by the university. BJ

- 58. Contact entertainers who are in town for other shows or functions about adding your event to their schedule. BW, SH
- 59. Look for free, not fee, speakers. Barter speaking engagements for something of value. BW
- 60. Use versatile speakers that can provide multiple programs at one flat rate. Ask if they can lead more than one session. Many speakers can also MC and facilitate. MSL, SH
- 61. Use local speakers/educators to eliminate travel costs. Some speakers offer discounted fees for events held in their hometown. SH, BW, MSL
- 62. For out-of-town speakers, negotiate a flat rate for travel or book the travel for them to control spending. YS, SW
- 63. For all speakers, put a cap on expenses in their contracts. Require receipts for all expenses, and let speakers know they will not be reimbursed without

them. If handouts are not received in time, make the speakers responsible for running them off. YS

- 64. Usually, speakers request more equipment than they need. If, at registration, the speaker checks off the supplies he or she needs, the planner will have time to cancel anything that was ordered, but is no longer needed. SH, BW
- 65. Discuss a discounted fee in exchange for allowing the sale of the speaker's book/product. Speakers tend to be more flexible with fees when they have a new book coming out. BW, CH
- 66. Ask speakers if they have and can bring their own A/V equipment, such as a wireless mic or projectors. Some prefer using their own equipment anyway. RP

Food & Beverage

- 67. Give an accurate headcount. Overestimating will waste money. JJ
- 68. An easy way to cut catering costs is to select a venue that provides seating, plates, glasses, etc. Many people are unaware that furniture rentals are a part of the catering budget. MO
- 69. Don't allow the banquet staff to automatically refresh coffee, water, etc., without permission. Institute a cap on alcohol consumption specifically related to wine and champagne. Ask the banquet captain to let you know when you have almost reached this cap before opening any additional bottles. AR
- 70. Order as much as you can by consumption, rather than per person or as part of a package. That includes

A calendar of where speakers will be when is available at speakers.ca/cost_saving.asp. FP

soda, coffee and water as well as alcoholic beverages. BW, SH, SG

- 71. Ask to have the chef custom-design menus that fit your budget. Many times, the chef is able to put together a delicious menu for a fraction of the à la carte cost. The chef may even suggest an item that's not on the menu. KP, JJ, TS, AR
- 72. Get sponsorship for meal functions. BW
- 73. Instead of going to an expensive facility for a fancy dinner, create a themed meal at the hotel or meeting venue. JB
- 74. Consider a restaurant for meals and meetings. They typically don't charge a fee to use their private dining rooms, you will save money on décor, and you can create a menu based on what you want to spend per person. By having the meeting during lunch, or when the restaurant isn't open, your group will have the place to itself. Most private spaces now offer flat-screen TVs, sometimes Web or

Giving a caterer a really low headcount to save money will ruin your credibility, so don't do it. Being honest about attrition is one thing, but if you ask the caterer to make 25 percent less food than you'll need, you will make them look bad, and that's not cool. PYM

The only time a package deal will save you money is if you have a group of heavy drinkers. TR

teleconference capabilities, too, which will save money on A/V costs. ACS/JL
 75. Themed events using ethnic foods are less costly. For example, hold a Mexican fiesta with a make-your-own taco bar, or go Italian with pizzas and pastas. "Create your own" food buffets add in a fun element for guests that distracts from the budget-friendly nature of the foods. SH, BW

- 76. Serve a Continental breakfast instead of a full American breakfast. Often times breakfast orders work out better to order per dozen, rather than per person. BW, YS
- 77. Reduce portion size. Ask for smaller coffee mugs if the cost per gallon is high. BW, CL
- 78. Ask chefs if accent items like butter or desserts can be made to fit meeting themes. It's a simple thing, but it makes a big difference. YS
- 79. Order morning/afternoon breaks à la carte. When you order à la carte, the client can take leftovers with them. Designate a number of gallons or time the table should be refreshed and then stipulate additional replenishments need to be authorized by you first. Ask that breaks are left out for at least 15 minutes after the next session starts. DY, YS
- 80. Serve light lunches like salads rather than heavy entrées. Use boxed lunches, if appropriate. BW
- 81. Use meal tickets. BW
- 82. Consider scheduling parallel dinner menus with other conference groups at the hotel to reduce costs for all parties involved. KS
- 83. Try hosting events away from the dinner hour to alleviate high food costs. Consider a happy hour or dessert reception instead. If you can't afford a lunch meeting, plan the event from 2-4:30 p.m. when people aren't typically that hungry, and serve light snacks and beverages SK, ACS/JL
- 84. Negotiate complimentary receptions or shorten the duration of the receptions. BW
- 85. At an open bar, reduce the selection to one light beer, one regular beer, one white wine and one red wine. CL
- 86. "Local flavor" packages, featuring wines from local vineyards or beers from local breweries, is less expensive than importing premium choice brands and exposes attendees to the local culture. KS

Dessert may be served near the sponsor's booth if a trade show follows a meal function. BW

87. Use opened bottles of liquor and wine for hospitality or VIP suites. BW

88. Use butler service instead of buffet tables. People tend to eat less when food is passed. BW, SH

Make sure full-service sites have a good catering department. You do not want to end up with sub-standard fare. SB

89. Eliminate the cocktail hour to save on the per person price. If you can't skip the cocktails, stationary appetizers will save you money over passed hors d'oeuvres. SG

90. Skip the champagne toast. Most people prefer toasting with what they're drinking anyway. SG

91. Instead of an open bar, offer a cash bar. People will drink less. BW

92. Return and get a refund for uneaten (packaged) food and drink. SH

93. Instead of serving heavy evening meals, offer heavy, but healthy, appetizers in a reception setting. It gives attendees more time to network with each other. CH

94. Reduce the number of courses at dinner. Look at buffet menus closely and cut out items that aren't needed. Ask for complimentary iced tea to be served at seated meals instead of paying for soda. BW, RW, YS

95. Organize optional group "networking" dinners, where attendees can go Dutch treat. BW

96. If the event planner chooses carefully, a three-course sit-down meal will be less expensive than a buffet meal. While buffets offer more choices, they are more expensive and create more waste. NO

Group Activities and Team-Building

97. Try karaoke. Many DJ companies can offer this with a music package (often for free as an end of the evening activity). It always gets laughs and is great for water cooler conversations the next morning. SG

98. If you are bringing in health and wellness authorities for educational sessions, ask them if they can also lead morning walks or exercise programs. Morning city walks also promote cross-cultural team building and features the city you are visiting. CH, DF

99. Create your own team-building activity, such as relay races or bringing a board game to life. On a modest budget, you can hire a professional facilitator to put together your team-building activity. JB

100. When planning an activity, see when the off-season is. For example, if the attendees ski during the first week of off-season, the slopes will still be great, but it will save a lot of money. ACS/JL

101. Ask the hotel if one of their chefs can give a cooking demonstration. Limit the number of attendees to the first 50. It's not costly, both men and women love it, and everyone gets to sample the food. YS

102. Encourage participants to make props and décor for the evening event. Host a team-building exercise where the guests are given items to make table décor, props, etc., and then use these items for the gala. RW

Hotels

103. Find a property that "needs" the business and is willing to negotiate. Depending on the economic situation, it might take more time and research to find them, but there always will be someone willing to work with you. AR

104. Hotels usually budget revenues by month. By moving your group's event to a month where the hotel has less revenue coming in (an off-season or shoulder date), you can save more than 30 percent in room costs. RT

105. Many hotel companies offer event planner reward programs. It's great for earning points from booking meeting space and hotel rooms. You also receive exclusive discounts for being a member. ACS/JL

- 106. Be realistic about your room block and meeting space needs to avoid paying attrition fees. CL
- 107. Don't settle for one comp room per 50 booked, especially if you plan to spend a lot on in-house A/V or catering. Ask for one room per 40 booked. Get comps based on your cumulative room use, not on the nightly count. BW, MS, YS
- 108. Negotiate an upgrade and amenity for VIPs and key executives at the convention rate. BW, YS
- 109. Get reduced room rates for staff, speakers and media (if applicable). BW
- 110. Select hotels offering frequent flyer points that can be used for speakers, staff or attendees. BW
- 111. Pair people in rooms to reduce costs. It creates a bonding experience and saves a significant amount of money. SF
- 112. The more you are willing to spend on in-house service/events at hotels, the more willing they may be to lower your room rate. Many may even comp a set of rooms when you book event space. Ask for 10-15 percent off in-house A/V and catering rates. MO, MS, SF, KP
- 113. Can you negotiate a multi-year contract with a hotel brand instead of booking year to year? In this environment, the world is your oyster if you can. Think: concessions, concessions, concessions. KH
- 114. Don't overlook the amenities offered by independently owned, boutique, extended stay and budget hotels. Most have free WiFi Internet, complimentary hot breakfasts and happy hours with free beer, wine and snacks. PYM

Marketing & Promotion

- 115. Go for sponsorships. Team up with vendors to assist with food, costs, etc., and to help spread the word about the event. DS, ACS/JL, RV
- 116. Provide financial incentives for suppliers to promote meetings to their audience. BW
- 117. Utilize Internet resources like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Plaxo and Spoke, etc., to reduce marketing costs. CH
- 118. Many vendors will cut prices or donate supplies if you can incorporate their brand into your event. For you, it's free or discounted supplies. For them, it's free publicity. MO
- 119. Get creative in leveraging your meeting/event marketing dollars. Look at the scope of your plan and "gang" special event programs, sales collateral, promotional items, multimedia efforts, etc., together to create reusable assets. AS
- 120. If you want to be front-page news, bring your meeting to a small town. The local community, visitors bureau and newspaper will give your group special attention. JM

Look for sponsors of golf or spa outings, and breakout sessions. In exchange for paying a speaker's fees, offer the sponsor the chance to introduce the speaker, thus gaining face time with attendees. ThS

Negotiations

- 121. Pick two of these three areas to focus on: Rates - Dates - Space. BW
- 122. Remember, the initial group rate you are given is a starting point. Don't be afraid to ask for a discount or upgrade. SB
- 123. Everything is negotiable in this economy. If you don't ask, the answer will always be "no." MSL, BW, DS, SF
- 124. Negotiate to remove resort fees, reduce hotel rates, reduce 10 percent or more on F&B, reduce 10 percent or more on all activities and waive box delivery fees. SF

125. Have hotels and convention centers throw in items that cost them nothing that are valuable to you, such as T1 lines, free Internet access, free or discounted parking, free board rooms, free A/V patches, spa privileges, late check-out and free drapery. MSL
126. Shop around. Many vendors have competitive pricing. Get at least three quotes and use those to go back and negotiate. MO
127. If it's the fourth quarter and you're negotiating an event that takes place in the following year, lock in the current year's catering and A/V prices. Typically that will save you 10 percent. KP
128. Gain bargaining leverage by booking several meetings at the same facility. MSL

Registration

129. Offer a discount to encourage attendees to register and pay early. Invest that money. Use early registrants to entice additional registrations. BW
130. Utilize on-line registration and Web-based conference tools to save on printing and postage costs, reduce paper use and bypass the time usually spent entering data manually. MS, KH
131. On the event Web site, let attendees sign up for activities or decline them. This will help you give an accurate activities headcount and avoid no-shows. TS

Shipping & Supplies

132. Registration information, confirmation packets, attendee kits and speaker handouts all can be sent through e-mail or given to attendees on USB sticks. It's environmentally friendly and it will save you a fortune on shipping and printing costs. MS, TS
133. If you must print materials, use local printing outlets in the meeting city to reduce shipping charges. Always request a proof before printing. Do the layout and design yourself. Create your own reusable templates that can be updated when necessary. BW, SH, SF
134. Check post office regulations before creating mailings. Prepare a timeline with deadlines so you can use the least expensive shipping rates. BW
135. Barter with shipping companies to send your shipments at no charge. BW
136. Project menus on screens instead of printing menus. TS
137. Bring your own signs, flip charts, markers and blank overhead transparencies. Utilize any equipment available from the office (office supplies, markers, etc.). All the little items add up if they are re-purchased for every event. SH, BW, MSL
138. Purchase office supplies locally to avoid shipping costs. SF
139. Create permanent generic, reusable signs with updated information on Velcro. BW
140. Prepare room signs listing all meetings in that room throughout the event. BW
141. Use hotel signage boards. BW
142. Recycle name badges. BW

"Anyone can make something look good with unlimited funds. It's the creative, frugal people that can make it look good on a budget, but that definitely takes more time and effort."
— Nancy O'Neill, Former Scripps Research Institute Event Planner

Staffing

- 143. Avoid transportation costs by hiring local staff. SF
- 144. Hiring check-in staff or set designers is expensive. If you have people power, build in time for your team to take on these tasks. MO
- 145. To insure on-site staff doesn't oversleep, arrange group breakfast functions to go over the daily agenda and any updates. BW
- 146. To find people, put an ad on craigslist.com or contact a local school for student volunteers to work for expenses and mentoring. Don't forget about interns – they are great and eager to help. ACS/JL, BW
- 147. Ask the local convention and visitors bureau if volunteers are available to help staff registration desks, etc. PYM

Transportation

- 148. Have a corporate travel policy. BW
- 149. Manage air travel in blocks. That way you can save by using coach transfers versus having to use individual cabs/limos. TS
- 150. Book accommodations and venues that are within walking distance of each other. DTS
- 151. Look for cities that are major airline hubs and are serviced by low-fare carriers. If you're looking to save even more money, pick a destination attendees can drive to. PYM
- 152. Negotiate to avoid Saturday night stay requirements. BW

“Having said all this, remember to spend your dollars wisely, because if you try to cut corners in too many areas, you may end up hurting the meeting's quality. My belief is quality over quantity. And always, always thank the vendors/suppliers that have helped you make the budget work!”

– Cindy Y. Lo, President/Owner, Red Velvet Events Inc.

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- TR Todd Rushing, Co-Founding Partner, Concentrics Hospitality Solutions, Atlanta, GA
- TS Terry Sloan, Director, Business Development, Carlson Wagonlit Travel Meetings & Events, Englewood, CO
- ThS Thom Singer, Author/Speaker, "The ABCs of Networking" and "Some Assembly Required: A Networking Guide for Women," Austin, TX
- TrS Tracey B. Smith, CMP, CMM, Vice President of Business Development, Garrett Speakers International, Minneapolis, MN
- YS Yvette Segarra, Manager of Meetings & Special Events, New Jersey Credit Union League, Hightstown, NJ

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