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SPRING 2021

MILWAUKEE MOVES ON TOWARD A BIGGER AND BRIGHTER FUTURE

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IN THE STATE'S
TAPROOMS

DESTINATION:
**RACINE AND
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EDITOR'S LETTER

For me, the onset of spring always carries a welcome sense of hope and renewal with it ... a sense of starting fresh. It's appropriate to relay then that the number of adults getting vaccinated is still increasing and well over the 50% mark. As a result, planners are seeing an uptick in interest for meetings and events, especially for small groups. In correlation, demand for domestic travel is rising as well, with more than 1 million people passing through U.S. airport checkpoints each day since March 11, according to the Transportation

Security Administration, a far cry from last year.

So it's safe to say that Wisconsin is on its way to getting back to normal, or whatever the new normal is, and forecasts are ever-brightening by the day. However, planning a meeting or event as COVID-19 carries on is not without risk for business. Fortunately, our Planner Basics department on Page 12 covers how you can better protect yourself with contract language that limits your risk as the state rebuilds. After all, as the idiom goes, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Molly Rose Teuke also suggests in her Personal Development column on Page 10 that, while positive thinking, even if it's about the return of the hospitality economy in Wisconsin, is generally a good thing, unchecked optimism can create blind spots for you. This myopia can leave you vulnerable to, unprepared for and surprised by setbacks while trying to achieve your goals. She argues there are situations that warrant rose tints and others that demand a more logical gray instead.

On that note, VISIT Milwaukee discusses how it's getting the city back to business with cautious optimism now that COVID-19 concerns are easing on Page 24 in "Milwaukee Moves On." Many indicators are pointing to the future of Milwaukee being bigger and better than ever. Speaking of the Brew City, if you're looking for something a bit more informal for your next meeting or event, consider one of Wisconsin's breweries or taprooms for small groups. "Brewing Up a Good Time" on Page 14 profiles four from around the state. They're not only experiential, fun and unique, but ideal for team-building, too.

Just south of Milwaukee lies Racine and Kenosha counties, which also hug Lake Michigan's shoreline. While they're close in proximity, these cities have two distinct atmospheres for hosting meetings and events. The one important thing they have in common, however, is majestic Lake Michigan. Social distancing is easy to practice outside and on the water when it's time to unwind — think kayaks, paddleboards, pedal boats, charter fishing expeditions, ziplining, and walking and pedal tours. Read more about these gems in the Great Lakes area on Page 18 in Destination: Racine and Kenosha.

Please note that some of the attractions and facilities highlighted in this issue may be operating on limited hours or temporarily closed due to COVID-19. Please contact each facility directly to confirm schedules and availability. And as always, thanks for reading Wisconsin Meetings.

Carrie Mantey
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FLOATING MEETING SPACE ON DELAVAN LAKE

Lake Lawn Resort, a full-service meeting destination in Delavan, recently completed a multimillion-dollar renovation of 32,000 square feet of meeting and event space, and also added Delavan Lake's only floating meeting space to its offerings. The renovation, inspired by the resort's lakefront setting, included:

- Refurbished public, dining, meeting and event spaces
- New carpeting, lighting fixtures, wallpaper and paint
- An upgraded audiovisual/sound system and new, state-of-the-art LED signage panels
- 1,800 new lean-back banquet chairs for meeting rooms
- A refresh of the popular dockside restaurant, The Lookout Bar & Eatery

Additionally, the *Lake Lawn Queen* — the resort's new, two-level, 76-foot cruise boat — can provide guests with an authentic lake experience for private meetings and team-building experiences. The cruise boat takes guests on a tour of Delavan Lake and its shores, which boast five Frank Lloyd Wright homes and other historical landmarks. The open-air top deck offers comfortable lounge seating and lake views from every angle, while the climate-controlled main level provides various seating options and panoramic windows. Catering and bar service can be arranged for any event.

NEW CAMPAIGN POSITIONS MILWAUKEE AS TOP MEETING DESTINATION

VISIT Milwaukee recently launched a new advertising campaign that positions Milwaukee as a bold, modern and experience-obsessed destination ready to safely host meeting and events. Created in close collaboration with the Wisconsin Center District, this campaign targets meeting and event planners across the country with an

emphasis on key markets in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Denver, and on industry segments that have proven successful for the destination in the past. The goal is to support long-lead convention bookings for 2022 and beyond, and maximize event attendance for 2021.

The creative direction for the campaign, led by Milwaukee-based agency Hanson Dodge, showcases the city as a community with top-notch infrastructure and amenities. It builds on the concept of "Unique Unites," an idea that was introduced last year in a short promotional video. The multimedia campaign brings this unique vision to life through side-by-side visuals that balance meetings-centric experiences with the city lifestyle.

New in 2021, the campaign has an ancillary component that reassures customers hosting events in Milwaukee this year that the city is taking the pandemic seriously, and has rigorous health and safety protocols in place.



GREENHOUSE NO. 7 EVENT VENUE DEBUTS AT MITCHELL PARK DOMES

Zilli Hospitality Group, a full-service catering, special events and venue management company, recently opened Greenhouse No. 7 at the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory, aka The Domes, in Milwaukee. Ready to begin booking events late this summer, the event venue can hold up to 400 seated guests and 600 cocktail guests.





The only greenhouse venue in Milwaukee, Greenhouse No. 7 is an open canvas and can accommodate anything from an intimate garden-style event to a large conference with smaller breakout spaces. With more than 7,600 square feet, there is ample space to safely hold events — no matter the size — and allow for social distancing as needed. Buffet- and station-style service are available for up to 350 guests. Greenhouse No. 7 also boasts a private entrance, free on-site parking, wheelchair accessibility, Wi-Fi/ audiovisual capabilities and more.

MADISON COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS RECEIVE GLOBAL EDUCATION AWARD

Janet Sperstad, the director of meeting and event management, and Holly Mercier, an instructor at Madison College, are the inaugural recipients of the Community Colleges for International Development Faculty Innovation in Global Education Award.



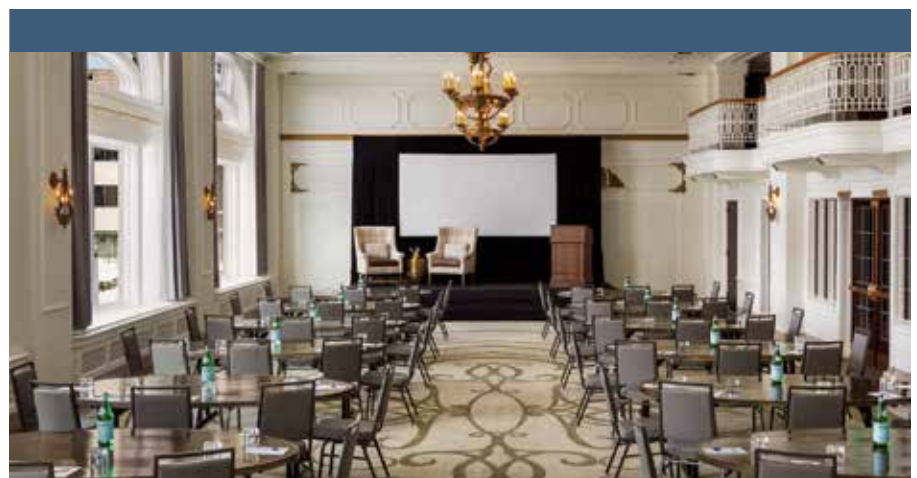
The instructors are co-directors of the Tri-National Global Studies Seminar, which connects students from Madison College with students at partner institutions in Northern Ireland and Germany. The Global Education Award recognizes the instructors as innovative leaders in the areas of study abroad and online virtual exchange. Sperstad and Mercier were honored with their award during a national online ceremony in February. www.wisc.edu

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VENUE SPOTLIGHT

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WELCOME TO THE NEW AND IMPROVED HEIDEL HOUSE

THIS HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER
ON GREEN LAKE IS ABOUT TO REOPEN ITS
DOORS WITH A FRESH LOOK.

BY SUE SVEUM

The last year has been long and challenging for event planners and conference centers alike. But just as we're finally starting to see a light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, the weather is warming up, and the newly remodeled Heidelberg House Hotel & Conference Center on central Wisconsin's beautiful Green Lake is opening its doors to hotel guests, diners and, yes, conference-goers again. You can expect a totally new look — and a very warm welcome — in mid- to late spring.

Since opening in 1945, the Heidelberg House has thrived as both a resort and event venue. But after more than 75 years, the owners decided it was time to sell. Lighthouse Hospitality Group jumped in and bought the resort last October — believing the iconic hotel's best days are yet to come — with the aid of some updates and renovations. And they think you're going to agree.

"The entire resort was demoed — from the lobby to the ballrooms and all of the guest rooms in between," says General Manager Nicole Sevcik. "We had crews working on every floor at once." Even the website has been updated and event planners can follow the daily construction progress at heidelhouse.com.

If you've visited before, you may hardly recognize the place now. There's new paint, new carpeting and beautiful new chandeliers in the ballrooms. "The décor

has been updated with a nautical look in pretty shades of blue, gray and tan," explains Sevcik. "And the front desk and lobby area features a huge bar where guests can gather."

She says that, although there are fewer guest rooms now, the removal of a partial wall makes each room feel larger. And there's also more parking — a welcome addition for event attendees.

Then, of course, the resort's scenic location, a bit off the beaten path, makes it uniquely appealing. "Meeting-goers can combine business with a relaxing Green Lake resort experience," says Sevcik. "And they'll be getting five-star service. Our management and staff are knowledgeable and experienced in this industry, and it shows. When you come to the Heidelberg House, you can expect exceptional guest services."

The hotel offers much more than just a relaxing day at the lake, including two ballrooms with seating capacities of 320 and 220, perfect for events. There's also a variety of smaller-sized rooms for meetings or breakout sessions. In-house catering is available, too. "Our sales and catering teams can accommodate all of your meeting needs down to the last detail," Sevcik says, "from the planning stage to the day of your event, to make sure it all goes smoothly."

As for dining, "Our two restaurants have been reinvented with an open layout overlooking the lake," explains Sevcik. "And the food and service are amazing." Oakwood offers fine dining for breakfast and dinner. The more casual Waves Pub & Grill serves lunch, and features a dance floor, an outdoor patio with a fire pit and a bar that's open until 2 a.m.

After hours, be sure to visit the hotel's outdoor pool and splash pad, or enjoy the indoor pool with its two hot tubs and tiki bar. Take a stroll on the walking path, enjoy a day of pampering across the street at Evensong Spa or hit the links at nearby Tuscumbia Country Club. And don't forget the lake.

"We're very excited to reopen, and work with the community and local partners," says Sevcik. "Whether you're here for a conference, a meeting, a wedding, or just a personal or family getaway, we want you to have the best stay ever."

Who says you can't mix business with pleasure? 



Sue Sveum is a freelance writer based in the Madison, Wis. area.



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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT COLOR ARE YOUR GLASSES?

HERE'S WHEN THAT ROSE TINT IS REALLY GOOD FOR YOU AND WHEN IT'S BETTER TO GO FOR GRAY INSTEAD.

BY MOLLY ROSE TEUKE

"We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are." — Anaïs Nin, writer

When you think about the world around you and how you respond to it, do you imagine an objective reality? You may pride yourself on objective, rational thought and sensible behaviors, yet, according to the field of behavioral economics (mere decades old), it turns out that you probably aren't all that objective or rational.

Optimism is at the root of much flawed thinking and flawed behavior. When you're surprised your project, relationship or even your life in general isn't going as well as planned, chances are that unbridled optimism bias is the cause.

ERRORS AND ILLUSIONS

Your brain likes shortcuts because they conserve energy and reduce effort. But shortcuts in thinking — unconscious mental biases — can lead you to faulty conclusions and irrational, disadvantageous behaviors. In other words, they can make you think that everything is going to go smoothly, even when it's not likely. Daniel Kahneman, who won a Nobel Memorial Prize for the work the late Amos Tversky and he did in behavioral economics, calls these mental biases "cognitive errors."

In Kahneman's 2011 book, "Thinking, Fast and Slow," he describes System 1 (fast) and System 2 (slow) thinking. System 1 relies on a quick, intuitive response. It makes you feel good in the moment because it's

easy and feels right. In reality, it makes you more prone to cognitive error, which could lead to results that aren't what you intended. In contrast, System 2 thinking requires that you think about your thinking, creating an awareness that can reduce cognitive error. Tversky and Kahneman say System 1 mental errors are predictable and preventable, not to say that they're easy to predict or prevent, though. Most of the time, you aren't even aware of your biases, much less able to overcome them.

Let's look at a cognitive error you actually stand a chance of mitigating — one so common it has its own colloquial expression — looking at the world through rose-colored glasses.

OPTIMISM BIAS

At its core, optimism bias is a tendency to overestimate the positive events that are going to happen to you and underestimate the bad. If you're like the 80% of humans who experience optimism bias, you operate under any number of mistaken beliefs.

You believe you're going to get into the best university, graduate at the top of your class, get a better job and make more money than the average college graduate. You believe you're going to marry well, never divorce and have the perfect number of children who turn out to be exceptionally gifted. Along the way, you believe you're going to have better health, experience fewer health crises like cancer or a heart attack, and live longer than the average American adult. You believe your vacations are going to be far more pleasant than the average vacation and, by the way, you're not going to get COVID.

Tali Sharot, a professor of cognitive neuroscience at the University College London, calls optimism bias a

"No matter who they are and what they are trying to do, we find that successful people not only have confidence that they will eventually succeed, but are equally confident that they will have a tough time getting there."

— Heidi Grant Halvorson,
"Succeed: How We Can Reach
Our Goals" author

cognitive illusion. “We are more optimistic than realistic, but we are oblivious to the fact,” she said in a 2012 TED Talk (which can be accessed at [ted.com/talks/tali_sharot_the_optimism_bias](https://www.ted.com/talks/tali_sharot_the_optimism_bias)). “And it doesn’t mean that we think things will magically turn out OK, but rather that we have the unique ability to make it so.”

Another facet of optimism bias is the illusion that you’re better at most things than most people. You consider yourself above average at getting along with others, being a good driver, saving money, and being attractive or honest. But we can’t all be above average. Someone has to be average or even below average, and chances are that someone is you, at least at some things.

Is optimism bias a bad thing? Not necessarily. It’s often quite useful. If you are optimistic, you are likely to be happier and healthier, largely because you have a greater sense of your own agency in how your life is turning out. Optimism is a self-fulfilling prophecy. As Sharot points out, optimism changes not just your subjective reality, but your objective reality as well, because it changes how you approach things. Optimism stirs you to try harder because you feel like you’re in control.

PUTTING OPTIMISM TO WORK

Managing your optimism is useful, too. Failure to achieve your goals is more often a failure of imagination than of effort. If you engage only in optimism, you are less likely to achieve your goal than if you imagine and prepare for the negative things that may hinder your path to success. In her 2012 book, “Succeed: How We Can Reach Our Goals,” Heidi Grant Halvorson says this is true of any goal you may desire.

“No matter who they are and what they are trying to do,” she writes, “we find that successful people not only have confidence that they will eventually succeed, but are equally confident that they will have a tough time getting there.”



“Mental contrasting turns wishes and daydreams into reality, by bringing into focus what you will need to do to make it happen.”

— Heidi Grant Halvorson,
“Succeed: How We Can Reach Our Goals” author

Believing your journey is going to be easy, on the other hand, can make you more likely to give up when the going gets tough.

Thinking about a desired future in the context of a present (possibly challenging) reality is called “mental contrasting.” The key is having enough realistic optimism to believe you can achieve that future, while at the same time being able to imagine the roadblocks. As Halvorson says, “Mental contrasting turns wishes and daydreams into reality, by bringing into focus what you will need to do to make it happen.”

When you set a goal for yourself, realize that those rose-colored glasses are important, but they don’t let you see the whole picture. When you want to achieve something that’s important to you, notice your optimism bias and take the time to do a reality check. The trick, says Halvorson, is to think both positively and realistically about your goal.

There’s an ingenious tool for managing optimism bias. It’s called “implementation intention.” This tool, developed by New York University’s goal guru Peter Gollwitzer, helps you anticipate the points where you might falter in your goal journey and think through an action plan to move past them. For example, let’s say you’re trying to get a job and rejection letters are making it hard to stay motivated (even though you could have reasonably expected to receive some).

An implementation intention may sound like, “I know there are a lot of qualified applicants out there, so for every rejection letter I get, I will send out another application.” By anticipating rejection letters and committing to implement a specific action when they arrive, you give yourself a path forward even when you’re discouraged.

“Because optimism bias can be both a blessing and a risk, you should be both happy and wary if you are temperamentally optimistic,” says Kahneman. Believe with all your heart that you’re going to succeed, but remain vigilant about reality. Enjoy the benefits of your rose-colored glasses, but don’t be blinded by, well, blind optimism. www.wisconsinmeetings.com



Molly Rose Teuke has an enduring curiosity about what makes our brains tick. Pre-COVID-19, she offered a program for Nicolet College called *Getting Your Brain on Your Side* and delivered brain-based leadership training for the NeuroLeadership Institute, a global leader in the performance arena. She also hosted a weekly classical music program on WXPB-FM, which will resume post-COVID-19. You can reach her at mollyrosecoaching.com.



PLANNER BASICS

RISKY BUSINESS

PLANNING A MEETING OR EVENT AS COVID-19 CARRIES ON IS RISKY BUSINESS. PROTECT YOURSELF WITH CONTRACT LANGUAGE THAT LIMITS YOUR RISK.

BY RONNIE WENDT

When COVID-19 swept through the state, Cheri Davis, owner of Cheri Denise Events, was among the planners navigating a sea of cancellations. She always knew contract language was important, but in the chaos, she witnessed how good and bad contracts played out. She explains that planning for the unexpected begins in the negotiation stage. "It's too late after the unexpected happens," she says.

As the Dairy State returns to the meetings and events game, it's essential for planners to include contract language that highlights coronavirus risks, and protects them legally and financially if someone gets sick.

John S. Foster, Esq., CHME, shed light on contract clauses in a recent Smart Meetings webinar titled "Event Contract Essentials in the COVID Era." He explains, "The good news is the vaccines are here. The bad news is COVID is still with us. But to call yourself a meeting planner today, you not only need to know how to run meetings, but you also have to be a risk manager."

SIX CONSIDERATIONS FOR BETTER CONTRACTS

"Event Contract Essentials in the COVID Era" raised six main points that Wisconsin planners can and should address in contract negotiations.

1. Know CDC guidelines.

Familiarize yourself with the most current guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) before beginning contract negotiations. Though

CDC guidelines are not mandatory, they provide a baseline for the best ways to protect health at large gatherings. A big legal worry when holding an event moving forward is someone getting sick. Adhering to CDC guidelines and local health standards helps design a meeting in a way that minimizes chances for spread of disease. It also limits legal liabilities by showing planners met duty-of-care standards for the event.

"If there's a breach of that duty, and it causes injury or illness, then negligence has occurred and you could be held liable for that negligence," reports Foster.

2. Have attendees sign waivers.

When people go on a trail ride, the equine establishment requires riders to sign a waiver that shows they understand the risk and won't hold the business responsible for injuries. The same type of waiver can protect organizations holding meetings during the pandemic. Have attendees sign a waiver as they register. Tell them that, by clicking on the button or signing the document, they acknowledge and understand that exposure to viruses and other hazards exist in public spaces, this exposure can put them at risk, and they assume all risks for potential exposure.



3. Specify protocols for venues to meet.

Include language that details the best practices you expect the venue to meet. You may list CDC guidelines, specific cleaning protocols and required certifications, such as the Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC) certification. The venue should indemnify the host for any failure to maintain standards on site that cause attendees to get sick. This clause puts the responsibility for meeting and monitoring listed health protocols on the venue.

"The good news is the vaccines are here. The bad news is COVID-19 is still with us. But to call yourself a meeting planner today, you not only need to know how to run meetings, but you also have to be a risk manager."

— John S. Foster, Esq., Foster, Jensen & Gulley LLC



4. Adjust force majeure.

The pandemic cast a spotlight on force majeure clauses. Some organizations found themselves in a pickle when they had to cancel. They could not get out of their contract and lost their deposits. Their lack of protection cost money.

Force majeure clauses are frequently referred to as "Acts of God" provisions; they usually apply to natural disasters and manmade disturbances that prevent events. With these clauses in place, you can reschedule a meeting without penalty. However, it's essential to add disease and pandemic to the list of protected events. A mandate from the health department during an uptick of cases can cap attendance or ban meetings altogether. This clause lets you cancel completely or move the meeting to a later date.

5. Address attrition.

Attach attrition to your force majeure clause. This protects you when numbers fall because of unforeseen circumstances. Maybe attendees coming from China encounter a travel ban. Or maybe limits hit closer to home. For example, during the pandemic, Illinois limited travel to and from Wisconsin. A force majeure clause that addresses attrition excuses partial performance. You can perform at a lesser number and not pay attrition.

Hotels still may require guarantees, according to Foster. Set a final date for when you can adjust counts for attrition, then negotiate

the percentage of attrition that will apply until the meeting day. "Include formulas for calculating the damages," he says. With business being down, many hotels are flexible with attrition, and will negotiate no-attrition stipulations or rescheduling options up front.

"It is a buyer's market," confirms Tara Wurtz, director of sales and marketing for the new Cambria Hotel Milwaukee Downtown. She explains that, because venues saw revenues plummet in 2020, most are willing to better accommodate attrition. "Planners want this clause stricken and removed from contracts because of the uncertainty, and many venues are willing to accommodate those requests," she says.

6. Get insurance.

During the pandemic, having event insurance protected organizers. Often only large events buy this insurance, but Davis recommends it for every event. "If it gets to where you cannot reschedule, insurance guarantees at least a partial refund," she says. www



Ronnie Wendt is a freelance writer based in Waukesha, Wis. She specializes in writing about media and events across the Midwest.



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Brewing Up a Good Time

For a fun team-building excursion, meeting planners can tap into one of the state's many taprooms.

By Kristine Hansen

For a no-frills, fun outing that doesn't require a strict dress code, overnight accommodations or — in some cases — even a fussy, catered meal, look no further than Wisconsin's many taprooms.

With attached outdoor spaces, dozens of Wisconsin's craft breweries were positioned to host small-group events even before the pandemic. If a corporate group is looking for a location to celebrate a company milestone or simply create a fun team-building outing away from the office, these sudsy spots are perfect. And what better excuse to try out a brewery's newest or seasonal ales?



©THE LONE GIRL BREWING COMPANY

Wisconsin is, of course, in the middle of a craft-beer explosion. Milwaukee alone is now home to at least 20 small-scale craft breweries, while more breweries are popping up in Madison, Eau Claire, Oshkosh and Green Bay. Many also house a restaurant, taproom, outdoor patio or private rooms for events.

Here are four breweries — from Milwaukee to northern Door County to Waunakee and Madison — ready to welcome your small group with their outdoor areas. When booking an event, don't forget to consider activities open to the public — such as tours, tastings, on-site yoga classes or food pairings — as these can often pivot to serve a private group, too.



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The Lone Girl Brewing Company, Waunakee

Dubbed The Landing, this four-year-old brewery's two private-event spaces are The Barrel Room and The Tasting Room. Access to an outdoor patio through The Tasting Room's double doors provides a group with an additional 400 square feet to spread out, with seating at high-top bar tables and stools. Two large televisions and a sound system inside are great if you need to show a presentation. The space is bookable with either a flat fee or a food-and-beverage minimum and, like The Barrel Room, includes a mobile bar with six beers on tap (your choice), as well as dedicated staff.

You can also tack on extras for a group, like a half-hour brewery tour for up to 14 guests that folds in a 6-ounce glass of SpeaKEE Easy Light, its flagship beer. For the ultimate team-building experience, book the Brew Your Own Beer package, which includes 2.5 kegs of a group's beer (crafted up with the tutelage of the brewery's beermaster) to tap at the event. Want to serve food? The brewery's restaurant makes it a breeze, with preportioned items like sliders, deviled eggs and chicken wings on its catering menu.

Door County Brewing Company, Baileys Harbor

In the sleepy town of Baileys Harbor, on the "quiet side" of Door County and hugging Lake Michigan, the craft brewery's new taproom debuted in 2017. Five years earlier, the brewery was formed by the McMahon family, but in a different location (still in Door County).

Almost as large as the 3,000-square-foot indoor taproom, Door County Brewing Company's outside area not only frequently hosts food trucks, but also live music on occasion. Three fire pits help extend the season into the cooler months, along with two enclosed structures — the Hacienda cabin and what was once Bearded Heart Coffee's tiny-house café — that are perfect for a small group and shelter from the wind chill. Groups can reserve the beer garden for their exclusive use, and also take advantage of a stage (for live music or other presentations) and dedicated bar area.

Beers span a wide range, but the brewery tends to specialize in Belgian-, French- and American-influenced styles, with odes to Door County whenever possible, such as the Polka King, a dark



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brown porter brewed in honor of late local Freddie Kodanko, and Little Sister and Big Sister, both witbiers with nods to their island namesakes in nearby Sister Bay. Speaking of sisters, in 2019, Door County Brewing Company additionally opened a sister brewery and taproom called Hacienda Beer Company on Milwaukee's East Side.



Capital Brewery, Middleton

Anybody who's spent time in Madison and is a beer aficionado knows about the Capital Brewery Bier Garten in downtown Middleton. What not everyone knows is that it can be reserved for a private group. Although it can accommodate up to 1,200 people for an event, smaller groups can also feel at home as it's easy to follow social-distancing guidelines. Access to a stage, tent, bar and communal-style picnic tables is included, and reservations are available between April and October.

Capital Brewery also rents out two indoor rooms: Bier Stube, which holds up to 80 people, with views of copper kettles imported from Germany, and the newly remodeled Grain Room, which holds up to 50 people. These can be rented separately or together as modifications allow for combining the two into one.

As one of the state's first craft breweries, opening in 1984, Capital Brewery brews a variety of beers — from India pale ales (IPAs) to barrel-aged beers — that can easily please a group with differing palates.



Milwaukee Brewing Company, Milwaukee

The new location for this brewery's tasting room — just a stone's throw from Fiserv Forum, home of the Milwaukee Bucks — opened its doors in 2018. But Milwaukee Brewing Company's roots stretch back to 1997 when the beer was crafted at the Milwaukee Ale House in the city's Historic Third Ward neighborhood, then a nearby facility beginning in 2009. Also of note: The new taproom is on the former Pabst Brewing Company campus and was once a bottling plant.

With this newest location, there are multiple spaces for a group to gather, including the rooftop of Bottle House Forty-Two, the modern restaurant that shares space with the brewery. The venue overlooks Fiserv Forum and includes the ability to program

content through a large video screen. At night, the city's skyline glitters, providing another focal point. Retractable garage doors coax in fresh air and, to further spread a group out, or make it a destination for a separate before or after event, the street-facing beer garden is available to groups as well. F Street Hospitality coordinates booking for these spaces. [WM](#)



Kristine Hansen is a freelance writer based in Milwaukee. She writes about food and drink, design and travel for a mix of regional and national audiences. Her clients include [ArchitecturalDigest.com](#), [Fodors.com](#), [Vogue.com](#), [Midwest Living](#) magazine and [Milwaukee](#) magazine. She recently also published [Wisconsin Cheese Cookbook](#), which is available on [Amazon.com](#).

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— DESTINATION —

Racine and Kenosha

ALTHOUGH RACINE AND KENOSHA COUNTIES
ARE CLOSE IN PROXIMITY, THEY HAVE TWO
ENTIRELY DISTINCT ATMOSPHERES FOR HOSTING
MEETINGS AND EVENTS.

By Melanie Radzicki McManus



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There are stately mansions and towering lighthouses. There are Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings, a beer garden and the spectacular Lake Michigan shore. And, of course, there's kringle. Lots of kringle. You don't need to know much more than this to start investigating the Racine and Kenosha area for your next meeting.

Racine and Kenosha counties are stacked atop one another in southeastern Wisconsin. The two areas are home to some 365,000 residents, plus the corporate headquarters

of such famed companies as Jockey International, Snap-on Inc., S.C. Johnson and Case IH. Yet while both locales share the same major asset — Lake Michigan — they have two different vibes.

Racine, Home of Wisconsin's Official State Pastry, the Kringle

Racine County sits directly north of Kenosha County. It boasts some two dozen meeting venues and 1,700 hotel rooms, perfect for groups of up to 300, says Dave Blank, president and CEO of Real Racine, the county convention and visitors bureau. The city's

flagship facilities are Delta Hotels Racine, just west of town, and the smaller DoubleTree by Hilton, which sits on the harbor overlooking Lake Michigan. The Delta has 222 rooms and 15,000 square feet of event space, while the DoubleTree has 121 guest rooms and 4,000 square feet of meeting space.

But that's not all. Ground will soon be broken for a lakeside hotel and convention center, a game-changer for Racine's meeting scene. The six-story hotel will have more than 170 rooms, plus a rooftop restaurant and bar. In addition, some 35,000 square

feet of convention space will be attached to the site's existing Festival Hall, which contains a 15,700-square-foot hall, plus a conference room. The hotel and convention center are projected to open in 2022.

Groups looking for more intimate meeting space also have plenty of options. Blank says one of the coolest spots in town is The DeKoven Center, which is housed in the former Racine College, built in the 1850s. The 11-acre property features impressive American Gothic-styled buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, lush gardens, wooded areas and walking paths that unspool along the lakefront. The facility has lodging for 85 people, full-service dining, a library,

and a spacious hall filled with antiques and artwork. There's even a labyrinth, fashioned after an 11th-century design from the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the center courtyard.

Another notable spot is the Wingspread Retreat and Executive Conference Center, a 15,000-square-foot facility designed by the famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Wingspread was originally built in 1939 as the family home of an S.C. Johnson scion. In addition to boasting Wright's famous organic, natural architecture, the 36-acre grounds feature natural paths, ponds, streams and more. A 40-room guesthouse, built in 2001, completes the offerings. "It's a beautiful space and everything is top-shelf," summarizes Blank.

When meeting attendees aren't taking notes or conferring, they often sign on for one of the free tours offered at the S.C. Johnson global headquarters, which include a Wright-designed administration building and research tower. Another popular option is a tour of Wind Point Lighthouse, one of the oldest and tallest active lighthouses among the Great Lakes.

Attendees should additionally be encouraged to visit North Beach, which stretches across 50 acres and is routinely rated one of the best beaches around. And while there is no organized tour of Racine's kringle bakeries, that can be arranged, according to Blank. "You can't visit Racine without visiting a kringle bakery and grabbing a couple," he insists.

Kenosha — Unique, Creative and Vibrant

Just to the south, Kenosha County perches atop the Illinois border. Once a gritty auto manufacturing town, today the city of approximately 100,000 has a bright, creative vibe, says Meridith Jumisko, a public relations director at Visit Kenosha. The new aesthetic is especially evident in some of its more contemporary meeting spaces, many of which were created from repurposed buildings. The Stella Hotel & Ballroom is a great example. The century-old building, originally home to the Kenosha Elks Club, is now an 80-room, full-service boutique hotel that can accommodate up to 250 for meetings. Steve Morgan, its director of sales and marketing, says The Stella's biggest selling point is its uniqueness.

While modern in design, the hotel retains some of the building's original brickwork, wood and terrazzo flooring. Its ballroom boasts the original chandeliers, which are quite striking, while the lower level is home to a game room where guests can enjoy playing Monopoly, chess, checkers and more. "The Stella makes for great photographic memories," emphasizes Morgan.

The boutique hotel also prides itself on the quality of its food (its executive chef used to work for the Chicago White Sox) and its impeccable service. As an example, Morgan says, a guest was recently looking for grape soda, which the hotel doesn't carry, so an employee ran out to buy some for him. "The Stella isn't a hotel," Morgan says, "it's an experience."





UPPER EAST ©VISIT KENOSHA

One block away, Upper East sits above the city's PUBLIC Craft Brewing Company, where its lofty perch affords great views of downtown Kenosha. The venue, which can seat up to 350, sports tin ceilings, and the building's original staircase and hardwood floors. The on-site caterer, Culinary Infusion, is also part of Circa on Seventh, another all-inclusive event space, which was created from an 1880s theater.

Nearby, in HarborPark, the Kenosha Public Museum and the city's Civil War Museum sit next to one another. The Civil War Museum features several meeting spaces that can hold up to 200 attendees. There's also room to gather in its spacious main lobby, plus an outdoor terrace overlooking the lake. Meanwhile, the Kenosha Public Museum offers meeting space for up to 180 via classrooms, a hall and its mezzanine. The museum is noted for its decorative and fine arts exhibits, which contain the work of famed artists such as Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall and Salvador Dali.

Jumisko says those seeking the unique should consider the Brat Stop and Parkway Chateau for their event. The iconic Brat Stop,



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a fixture on the west side of I-94 since 1961, is a combination restaurant, sports bar, cheese market and concert venue that also has meeting space in the attached Parkway Chateau.

Just as in Racine, meeting attendees and their families love to head to the lake when it's time to unwind. You can rent kayaks, paddleboards and duck pedal boats right

on the lakeshore, Jumisko says. The city also offers charter fishing expeditions, ziplining and self-guided walking tours of four historic districts. And debuting in 2021 — Lakeshore Pedal Tours will offer various city tours for six to 14 people via an intriguing, foot-powered vehicle. All of the guests provide the pedal power, while the company provides a driver and first mate, the latter of whom doubles as a bartender.

Kenosha is developing a strong foodie scene as well. "We've got lots of unique places, old ones and funky ones," says Jumisko. The Big Star Drive-In and The Spot Drive-In, for instance, are 1950s-era restaurants that still feature carhops. In contrast, the Hobnob is a traditional supper club on the Kenosha-Racine border. The Apis, opened in 2020, is both a hotel and a restaurant, which offers inventive plates, such as blistered shishito peppers with chimichurri crema and lobster roll sliders.

No matter which area you choose for your meeting or event, Racine or Kenosha, you'll end up in a city with a walkable downtown filled with restaurants, shops and attractions — and, of course, the incomparable Lake Michigan. And remember: Don't go back home without grabbing some kringle. [WM](#)



Melanie Radzicki McManus often writes about Wisconsin from her home in Sun Prairie, Wis. In 2015, she received the Lowell Thomas Grand

award as an honorable mention Travel Writer of the Year. Lowell Thomas awards are considered the most prestigious travel writing awards in North America.



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Milwaukee Moves On

As COVID-19 concerns ease, Milwaukee moves forward and looks toward a future that's bigger and brighter than ever.

By Ronnie Wendt

March 6, 2020, marks a date that Marty Brooks, CEO of the Wisconsin Center District, will not soon forget. It represents the brightest day of his career, followed by some of the darkest.

"On March 6, I shared one of the biggest presentations of my career," he says. "We were excited about what 2020 looked like for our organization and the city. We were preparing for the Democratic National Convention (DNC) and expanding the Wisconsin Center."

Seven days later, COVID-19 pulled the rug out from underneath the city's tours, and meetings and events industries. The Cream City, population 587,721, went from having everything going for it — winning sports teams, happening venues, tasty eats and hyper-local experiences — to a ghost town overnight.

"A week after my big presentation, the National Basketball Association (NBA) cancelled its season and businesses began to shut down," Brooks says. "COVID-19 put a placeholder on tourism and hospitality in Milwaukee." A barrier that only recently began to lift.



In 2020, Milwaukee suffered an estimated \$1 billion economic impact to its tourism industry and saw over 100 events cancelled, reports Tara Wurtz, director of sales and marketing for the new Cambria Hotel Milwaukee Downtown. She recently testified before Congress about the pandemic's impacts on the state's hospitality and tourism industry. A major hit was losing the DNC convention. VISIT Milwaukee predicted the once-in-a-lifetime event would draw over 50,000 people to the city and generate \$200 million in revenue. But because of COVID-19, the DNC held a mostly virtual event that generated just \$3 million in economic impact.

But even amid the bad news, a glimmer of hope is shining. The city now bustles with talks of recovery and Brooks reports that securing financing for the Wisconsin Center expansion in December 2020 is one of the brightest stars of that recovery.

"I don't think any of us imagined a year as bad as 2020, but we are seeing a light at the end of the tunnel," Brooks says. "If everyone is smart, thoughtful and diligent, by this time next year, I'm hopeful that we'll be at 100% capacity or close to it."

The true test comes in August — the date most downtown firms are setting for their return to the office. "We should see things start to improve by that date," says Wurtz. "But I don't think we will see things really start to bounce back until the end of the year. Even then, gatherings will be smaller."

Keeping People Safe

Milwaukee suffered greater effects than neighboring cities during the pandemic. The City of Milwaukee Health Department capped gath-

erings at 10 people until February 5. Months earlier, other communities, like Brookfield and Waukesha, allowed meeting sizes of several hundred, drawing business away from the city.

"This presented real challenges," says Leslie Johnson, vice president of sales, VISIT Milwaukee. "We had groups that wanted to put together a plan, but struggled because we didn't know if, or when, our city would allow larger groups to gather. The new order gives our customers the confidence and hope they need to plan events again." Phase 6 of the COVID-19 public health plan from the City of Milwaukee Health Department lifted limits on indoor gatherings to the lesser of: 75% of the total occupancy of the location established by the city, if any; one person for every 30 square feet of floor space open to the public; or 750 individuals in addition to any employees or contractors required to operate.

VISIT Milwaukee is leading the charge to bring business back. The organization released a video encouraging planners to choose the city for meeting essentials, health and science expertise, and the fun of it.

"Milwaukee is an extremely special place," VISIT Milwaukee President and CEO Peggy

Williams-Smith says in the video. "I don't think I can overstate how important the safety of customers and staff is to the business owners in the city of Milwaukee. [Businesses] want to provide a world-class experience to everyone who walks in their door, but they also want to make sure they're doing it in a safe environment."

David Caruso, an award-winning event planner, designer and founder of Dynamic Events, narrates the video, which brings together members of Milwaukee's hospitality community to share their work in making the city a safe destination for meetings and conventions. The video includes appearances from representatives of the Wisconsin Center District, Medical College of Wisconsin, Lakefront Brewery, Potawatomi Hotel & Casino and Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport.

"We at VISIT Milwaukee felt it was important for us to lead the charge and work with our partners, so that travelers, when they come to Milwaukee, know that we care about them," Johnson says of the video.

VISIT Milwaukee's communications strategy hones in on how the city continually works to enhance meeting and event safety. Every



event over 200 people must meet health department guidelines. But for those meetings under 200 attendees, VISIT Milwaukee wants planners to know hotels, restaurants, venues and caterers operate under strict protocols to keep people safe. "We work in lockstep with the City of Milwaukee Health Department to make sure planners have the needed information to book with confidence," Johnson says.

"If everyone is smart, thoughtful and diligent, by this time next year, I'm hopeful that we'll be at 100% capacity or close to it."

— Marty Brooks,
Wisconsin Center District

In fact, some Milwaukee hotels and venues attained Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC) certification to show they are prepared and genuinely care about public health, according to Johnson. The performance-based, accredited program helps venues launch a comprehensive cleaning, disinfection and infectious disease prevention effort. Venues are also investing in GBAC-recommended technologies, such as electrostatic cleaners and touchless technology to mitigate risk.

Some venues even installed Global Plasma Solutions' plasma air filtration systems, which use needlepoint bipolar ionization (NPBI) to clean the air. The patented technology employs an electronic charge to create a plasma field filled with high concentrations of positive and negative ions. As these ions travel through the air, they attach to particles, pathogens and gas molecules to filter out contaminants.

The Wisconsin Center was among the first Milwaukee venues to achieve GBAC certification, mentions Brooks. "This certification is the gold standard for infectious disease [prevention] and cleanliness. We share this benchmark with planners to instill confidence in our ability to hold a safe event. It shows we put the safety and wellbeing of their attendees first."



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Cambria prides itself on being a proactive vs. reactive company, according to Wurtz. The hotel not only added electrostatic disinfectant sprayers to its cleaning arsenal, but the facility also has 132 separate heating, ventilation and air conditioning units, ensuring that each room operates off its own heating and cooling system. "This way, we are not recycling air and spreading pathogens throughout the building," she says. "We can isolate and protect guests and attendees."

All these changes help safeguard health at meetings and events. "Before COVID-19, you never knew what really happened behind closed doors," Johnson says. "GBAC certification says that venues have taken steps to keep visitors safe and that they have a lot of behind-the-scenes safety measures in place from the entry point of that building to every individual who works there. It shows they have trained employees to hold sanitation and health safety to the highest standard."

Growth within the Chaos

When President Joe Biden came to Milwaukee for a CNN town hall event on February 16, Brandon Drusch, general manager of Saint Kate - The Arts Hotel, reports that downtown Milwaukee came alive again. "It was an incredible night to be downtown,

just the excitement, the energy throughout the hotel, in the heart of the theater district. It's great to see the arts community, the partnerships within the neighborhood, everything come together to put a spotlight on Milwaukee. It was great to see it come back to life," he told Milwaukee Business Journal after the event.

The town hall sparked a return of meetings and events to the city. The Wisconsin Center started hosting safe and successful youth sports events beginning with the Wisconsin Juniors Volleyball Club and Badger Region Volleyball Association championships in March. The center, designated a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) type 2 federal pilot community vaccination clinic, also vaccinates over 1,000 people a day.

Wurtz says venues are seeing requests for proposals coming in for the rest of the year, but she admits event sizes are smaller. "Historical statistics would tell you the event would be this size, but it's half that," she says. "We are seeing events come back, but we're not totally there. To further promote safety for our associates and guests, we continue to enforce wearing masks and encourage our team to become vaccinated."

Confidence in a triumphant return reigns supreme. Milwaukee's Deer District recently approved plans for a nine-story, 205-room Marriott Autograph Hotel just north of Fiserv Forum. The development will feature a two-level restaurant and lounge on one corner, and street-level retail space on another. Both areas will activate the street on either side of the hotel's main entrance. In addition, Marriott plans to add a second restaurant and bar with indoor and outdoor space on the ninth floor.

Construction on the new hotel will begin this fall, with a targeted completion date of late 2022 or early 2023. The new hotel will create about 100 hotel and restaurant jobs, and its new rooms will bring the downtown area hotel room total to 5,708.

The feather in the cap that's producing the most excitement for a Milwaukee rebound, however, is the forward movement of the \$420 million Wisconsin Center expansion after being on hold for over a year.

This long-awaited project will add 112,000 square feet to nearly double the center's size. The project, which will open in 2024, creates 300,000 contiguous square feet of exhibition space and adds 24 flexible meeting rooms, a ballroom with seating for 2,000, six loading docks, an executive kitchen and 400 parking spaces.

Johnson reports the slower pace of the past year led the city to invoke an advisory council to offer feedback on the center's expansion. The council is made up of a long-standing group of meeting planners that VISIT Milwaukee has summoned annually to advise on sales and marketing strategies. The members zeroed in on bathrooms, workspaces, lighting and flexible meeting space. Furthermore, a group of executives from the Wisconsin Center District, VISIT Milwaukee and more toured other convention centers in comparably sized cities, like Louisville, Nashville and Indianapolis, for inspiration.

"The silver lining of having this approved during the pandemic is that we could bring in planners and ask them what's important to them in a building like this," she says. "Because of the pandemic, we can incorporate things no one considered before. We have more air walls and the ability to be very flexible very quickly."

"Expanding our convention center will attract larger groups than we could accommodate before," continues Johnson. "Historically, larger groups could not come to Milwaukee because of the limited footprint of our convention center."

A pandemic doesn't happen every day, nor does a citywide shutdown. But with resiliency, planning and preparedness, Milwaukee shows it's possible to overcome challenges and return to business as usual. [www](#)

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The Top 7 Social Media Mistakes

Supersize your social media marketing by avoiding these common mistakes.

By Ronnie Wendt

"You need to plan and start early to get your message out. Otherwise, you're scrambling and your posts may lack brand consistency."

— Andrea Strand,
Cutwing Marketing Solutions

Using social media to promote an event can feel as overwhelming as putting it together in the first place. The questions seem almost as endless as the proposition itself. What should posts convey? Will people even see them? How often should posts go up?

There's plenty to do before, during and after launching a social media program. In this sea of uncertainty, planners can make mistakes. Here are the top pitfalls to avoid when integrating social media into your event marketing strategy.

1 Thinking If You Build It, They Will Come

The top mistake planners make is creating a social media event page and believing that will magically draw attendees, says Josh Klemons, a digital storyteller/strategist for Reverb Communications of Madison. "They don't do any posts other than creating the event itself, and expect that to lead to conversations and attendance," he says.

Create an event as far in advance as you can. Then post about the event more and

more frequently in the weeks that follow to generate a buzz around it.

2 Not Planning It Out

Not planning posts in advance also plagues event social media, says Andrea Strand, owner of Cutwing Marketing Solutions of Lake Geneva. "You need to plan and start early to get your message out. Otherwise, you're scrambling and your posts may lack brand consistency."

Develop a six-month plan or build in an even longer timeline if it's a large event. Craft posts and get approvals long before posting them. Study your demographic, then plan posts that appeal to it. As you plan, Strand advises gathering needed materials in advance. "If you know that you will post on a specific day, then have words, graphics and video ready to go," she says.

3 Selling but Not Telling

Many planners use social media as a sales pitch, but forget to tell potential attendees why they need to attend. The posts say: "Pick up your tickets now," "There's still

time to register," or "Time is running out," but none give a reason to attend. "The only time you should tell people to buy tickets is if you're almost sold out. Otherwise, 100% of your pitch must add value to people's lives," Klemons says.

Add to your audience's world by sharing a post about the chef's culinary training and highlighting the dishes that will be presented at the event. Create hype around the entertainment; alert attendees when they drop a new album. Formulate a post that says, "You won't believe the \$1 million view from the ballroom" with a picture to prove it.

"You need to give people a reason to share posts with friends," he says. "It expands your reach. Suddenly, you have a group of people excited and talking about your event."

4 Not Remembering the Before, During and After

Every event social media program should have three parts: the before, the during and the after. "Everyone posts the before because they want to drive attendance. Some planners remember the during. But nearly every planner forgets the after," Klemons says. "And it's a huge missed opportunity to raise event awareness for next year."

Post regularly during the event. Livestream the keynote speaker, post photos of the food, live-tweet seminars and share perfor-

mance photos. And remember to create an event hashtag so attendees can share their event stories.

"Give those who did not attend a reason to wish they had and the encouragement to attend next year," he says. "Not everyone can attend an event, so post things that make them feel like they're part of it."

Afterward, share event accomplishments with followers. "How much money did you raise? How many people attended? If you do not know the numbers, say, 'We had amazing attendance,'" he suggests. "Remember to thank attendees for coming and people who helped with the event."

5 Disseminating Boring Content

Develop engaging content, advises both Klemons and Strand. "Video is huge," Strand says. "Speaker highlights are always nice." If you plan to have a silent auction, develop posts that show what you are auctioning off. Cultivate a slideshow highlighting fun photos of a previous event or illustrating how the event benefits attendees.

"Create content they will want to share," adds Klemons. "You are trying to break through a very crowded space, so it's important to craft content that speaks directly to attendees."




6 Zero Promotion

Promoting posts is as important as knowing what posts you will present. Set an advertising budget, then boost posts and advertise to expand reach. Social media platforms do not show posts to 100% of your audience. Boosting a post ensures more of your audience sees it. "Boosting a post enhances the views of followers and people associated with those followers," Strand says.

Ads build on that premise, showing your post to people outside your followers who fit into a predefined set of characteristics. For instance, for a manufacturing equipment trade show, you might place a Facebook ad that goes to people between 35 and 45, living within 50 miles of Madison, who work in the manufacturing field.

7 Working Alone

Maybe your planning team lacks the bandwidth to take on social media, too. That's OK. Sometimes the best approach is hiring an expert to do the work for you. "If you are always scrambling to post, maybe it's time to get help from a social media expert with the technical knowhow to keep social media marketing on track," Strand says.

Social media packs the power to make events bigger and better than ever. Develop a plan, create engaging content and promote posts to supersize your social media efforts. 





Acing that Video Conference or Livestream — An Actor's Take

Learn how to translate your communication and public speaking skills into successful videos and livestreams.

By Shelby Rowe Moyer

A lot happens when you walk into a room to give a presentation, says Clare Haden, a Madison-based professional actor and vocal coach.

Before you even speak, the audience is visually scanning your body language for cues that help them form an opinion about how comfortable and confident you are — or if you seem nervous and distracted. This 10- to 20-second analysis is formed when we meet someone for an interview, speak up at a meeting or stand in front of a crowd at an event.

In other words, first impressions are important.

"But that's so much harder to do when you're on a video screen," Haden says. "You can't see the whole picture and it's harder to read those cues in a video. You have to work very hard to make sure your facial expressions are conveying what you want to send out. And we have a lot of vocal variety, so you're constantly listening for those cues as well."

Last summer, Haden taught Acting Skills for Life — a class that teaches techniques for stronger communication and public speaking — at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The course drew students and

professionals wanting to sharpen their verbal bravado from every industry. Aside from the typical activities that teach students how to carry themselves, and be aware of their tone and delivery, the class was also a crash course on translating these skills to video.

Engage Your Audience

Eye contact is particularly important when delivering a message on video. Viewers are going to be focused on your face and breaking eye contact can disengage them. If you're someone who uses hand gestures, continue to use them and be aware of your vocal tone. "People can perk up when there's a dynamic shift with vocal energy," Haden explains. So mix up the tempo of your message, as well as how you project or express your voice. Listen to experienced speakers, like Michelle Obama, she says, and dial in on how they use vocal expression to rope in a crowd.

Haden also recommends including some visuals to change up what viewers are seeing on camera, adding some personal stories into your talk and outlining the "why you should care" component early on. "They'll hang out with you for the ride, but if you don't build [the why] in early, then it's a little easier to get distracted or not stay with you," she says.

Create Your Own Energy

When speaking in front of a crowd, you can vibe off of, and get energy from, the audience's reaction. On video, much of that disappears. Haden says she visualizes how she wants the audience to respond, which can help maintain confidence and momentum throughout the session. Or if you can see people's faces, take note of their reactions. Be intentional about creating pauses in your talk, which give you a moment to take stock of the audience's cues.

"It takes practice," Haden says. "For people who have a big interview or a high-stakes situation, it's not unheard of to conduct [a rehearsal] with friends or family. There's so much value in being able to take the time to practice saying it out loud. That would be my biggest thing. Don't go into it cold, without having practiced."

Build Up Your Confidence

Before hopping on an important call, Haden says it helps her to know that she prepared. She takes some deep, nostril breaths and does some vocal warmups to ready herself. "You don't think twice about an athlete or musician practicing every day," she says. "You kind of have to do the same thing as a public speaker. You have to practice and get your mind in the right space."

If you want to know how you come across on camera, record yourself speaking. It makes you much more aware of your facial expressions, body language and tone.


Another exercise Haden finds helpful is to connect back to your core values. "Think about when you were really connected to that core value and you felt really good about yourself," she says. "What were you wearing? Whom were you with? What did it smell like? Distill it down to six words and, a moment before you go into a difficult conversation or interview, focus on those six words. It connects you back to who you really are."



Lastly, breathe. Yeah, yeah. Everyone says this. And there's a reason for it. Most people get nervous before speaking, and your body can go into its primal fight-or-flight physiology, Haden says, which makes your breath shallow. Get a couple of deep, nostril breaths in to help not only support your vocals, but also calm your nerves.

Seek Additional Support

Toastmasters International is a great way to hone your speaking acumen. President of the Menomonee Falls chapter of Toastmasters Mark Person says members are meeting virtually. During meetings, members walk through difficulties they are experiencing before discussing techniques for prepared speeches — such as eye contact, audience engagement, speech structure and effectiveness.

With these tips and a little bit of practice, you, too, can translate your communication and public speaking skills into successful video and livestreams. 



Madison-based Shelby Rowe Moyer is an assistant editorial director for Nei-Turner Media Group, managing a myriad of its publications. And when she's not working, she's chasing her two pups around and subduing her demanding, elderly guinea pig.

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MORE THAN A NUMBER

REGGIE DRISCOLL EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS AND MAKING MEMBERS FEEL HEARD THROUGH COVID-19.

BY CARRIE MANTEY

Reggie Driscoll started his career by washing dishes, then worked his way up to managing restaurants, hotels and bars. His background is firmly entrenched in the hospitality industry. Now a senior meeting professional at the State Bar of Wisconsin, an association dedicated to Wisconsin attorneys, Driscoll emphasizes that communication is key to success. And the connection between people that communication fosters became even more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic when face-to-face events were temporarily suspended.

Driscoll says, "Last year was a struggle. At the State Bar, we worked hard to maintain our relationships with other planners and our facilities. This was not always easy to do while cancelling and postponing events. It was a challenge with so many people being laid off, furloughed or just losing their jobs. Many times, when you contact a supplier or even other planners, you end up talking to someone new. But we all need to rely on our experience and resourcefulness to build this industry back to where it was. It is a strong industry with incredible people, so we will get there. We just need some time. Never before has the importance of relationships in this industry been more prevalent."

In addition to his duties at the State Bar, where he just celebrated his 14-year anniversary, Driscoll is also transitioning from his role as the vice president of membership to the vice president of education for the Wisconsin chapter of Meeting Professionals International (MPI). Communication with MPI members


during the pandemic has been just as vital as staying in touch with suppliers at the State Bar.

"MPI needed to reach out to our members to make them feel that they were more to us than just a number. We reached out to every member by email, telephone or any other means available. It was important to listen to the members and see what they were going through," Driscoll says. "Just letting our members know that they are not alone and that there are many resources available was wonderful for the people we contacted."

Many of those resources — for learning new standards, protocols and dialogs for dealing with the coronavirus — can be found on the MPI Wisconsin website, at mpi.org/tools/coronavirus. They include information on new certification programs, a safety and security microsite for risk assessment and emergency planning, a library of more than 200 on-demand educational sessions and webinars, and a downloadable coronavirus toolkit containing social media assets, a PowerPoint slide and badges to display.

"The networking, website resources and relationships that are built through MPI will be priceless for our industry in the future. Business-wise, many planners will start by sending requests for proposals out to MPI members that they know rather than just sending them to a facility where there is no relationship. This helps build our association and, ultimately, our industry."

As Driscoll pivots from his responsibilities as vice president of membership to education for MPI-Wisconsin, he can draw on his experience at the State Bar. "For both associations, COVID-19 has reaffirmed for me the importance of listening to our members and delivering current, relevant education. For the State Bar, continuing education is the focus of most of our events. I create complete events — including meals, receptions and networking — around the education."

When asked about the future of meetings and events in Wisconsin, Driscoll predicts, "On the horizon for our industry is an opportunity to recover, learn and grow. I know for many of my colleagues throughout the state, this has been a time to reflect, confirm what we are doing and seek out ways to keep ourselves relevant through any other difficulties that may come in the future. This year has shown us a hundred ways we can be knocked down, but we've also learned a hundred and one ways to pick ourselves back up." 

MPI is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide, providing innovative and relevant education, networking opportunities and business exchanges. For membership information, please visit mpiwi.org.



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