Meeting Design Principles Handout

Meetings are produced, marketed, sold and consumed like products, and like many products, they can become stale and outdated. Think like an experience designer, leverage the elements that go into planning a meeting and throw in a few new ones for good measure. Start with these meeting design principles—derived from MPI’s research into meeting design. This handout can be used in conjunction with the Meeting Design Worksheet.

PRINCIPLE OF ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

Set clear, measurable goals before you begin designing your meeting so that afterwards, you can determine your return on investment. Assessment and evaluation are bookends that give meaning to all other meeting elements. Without these, other fundamentals will be at risk or fail.

PRINCIPLE OF MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

Connect with other people, physically, intellectually and especially emotionally. Emotionally engaged people perform better and have higher job satisfaction. Meetings should not be impersonal affairs during which strangers are thrown together and left to fend for themselves. We are social beings who need connections, especially in times of challenge.

PRINCIPLE OF DISTRIBUTED LEARNING

Provide people with the information they need to know when they need to know it in a manner that’s convenient for them. The top two reasons people attend meetings are the educational programs and the networking. In the language of education professionals, that’s formal and informal learning, and the latter trumps the former when it comes to knowledge retention and transfer—which is really what it’s all about. Also, think about distributed learning in terms of when it occurs: before, during or after the event.

PRINCIPLE OF COLLABORATION

Tap into the collective intelligence of the group to better understand its needs, generate new ideas, determine best solutions and put plans into action. One of the key reasons people meet is to address some goal, challenge or problem. And in that pursuit, the wisdom of the crowd is an invaluable resource. Inherent in every meeting, is the opportunity for change, progress and innovation.

PRINCIPLE OF EXPERIENCE

Design a meeting with the participant in mind—not just in selling a product or providing a service, but also in creating a meaningful and memorable experience. The world is awash in bad design. Meetings are no exception.
PSAV provides in-house audiovisual services for more than 800 properties around the world that want to keep their clients coming back for memorable events and meetings, year after year. PSAV brings years of real-world knowledge from thousands of events and meetings. PSAV also owns and operates one of the largest, most up-to-date equipment inventories in the industry. From high-definition projectors to huge plasma screens to futuristic digital signage, PSAV provides all your event technology solutions. Visit www.psav.com.

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About the MPI Foundation
The MPI Foundation is committed to bringing vision and prosperity to the global meeting and event community by investing in results-oriented initiatives that shape the future and bring success to the meetings and events community. For more information, visit www.mpifoundation.org.

About The Perfect Meeting
The Perfect Meeting is an experiential design firm committed to optimizing the meeting attendee experience. The Perfect Meeting advises meeting stakeholders on learning and engagement strategies, the future of meetings and related issues.

About Association Insights
Association Insights provides research and consulting services to nonprofit organizations and helps them find solutions and make better decisions.

About MPI
Meeting Professionals International (MPI), the meeting and event industry’s largest and most vibrant global community, helps its members thrive by providing human connections to knowledge and ideas, relationships and marketplaces. MPI membership is comprised of more than 20,000 members belonging to 71 chapters and clubs worldwide.

For additional information, visit www.mpiweb.org.

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