

## 2006: Anticipated Trends in Meetings

A slight growth in the meetings industry overall appears likely next year, with more corporate meetings and greater attendance at conventions and trade shows. The growth will likely vary among industry sectors and specific companies rather than rise across the board.

Meeting News surveyed 290 corporate meeting planners and their watchword for 2006 is this: *Caution*.

The biggest hot-button issue for the meetings industry next year will be the rising cost of meeting services according to 55% of planners surveyed. The 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest issue is airline industry woes - coming in at 15%.

Almost 79% of planners sur-

veyed feel that the number of meetings their company holds in 2006 will not increase or increase only very slightly from 2005.

With the number one concern being the rising cost of services, what are planners doing to prepare?

- ∴ Booking in low or shoulder seasons
- ∴ Using less expensive destinations
- ∴ Shortening the length of meetings
- ∴ Cutting back on food, beverage and entertainment
- ∴ Booking further in advance

∴ Booking multiple meetings with one hotel property or chain

As for the airlines:

The jury is still out on fuel costs, but you may want to pad your budgets 5% to offset potential increases. Re-examine your travel policy with regard to travel times and number of connections. Bank on the \$100 change fee being a stringent rule.



## Ask Us About...

- ∴ Supporting Web casts and web-enabled meetings. We have the technology and the task expertise
- ∴ Honoraria and physician payment services
- ∴ Options for “leave behinds” that really are useful—and different
- ∴ Web based post program surveys and reporting

## Communicating During Crises

Here are some key tips for creating a first-class meeting/event emergency communications plan:

- Establish the disaster recovery and communications “base” in a remote location - not where the event is taking place
- Make sure you are instantly able to back up your Web site and telephone system
- Develop a template system for your Web site so you are able to drop in contact details, staff bulletins, news updates, etc. on the home page

- Set up the telephone system so it can roll over to your remote location “base”
- Communicate early and often so people don’t speculate about what’s going on
- Report facts, not maybes. Admit what you don’t know. Trust is all-important.

Last, but not least: utilize remote office locations; know where your staff are located to keep things moving

- excerpted from *meetingsnet.com*

## Did You Know...

- Edgar Rice Burroughs wrote 26 *Tarzan* books without ever visiting Africa
- Montpelier, Vermont is the only U.S. state capital without a McDonald’s
- In March 2000, the Disney company reversed its 43-year ban on mustaches for its theme-park employees
- The first women flight attendants in 1930 were required to weigh no more than 115 pounds, be nurses, and unmarried.



## 12 Steps To Creative Problem Solving

Ever get stuck in a small group setting by not being able to get beyond a problem or a challenge? Here are 10 tips to try that might get you started on the road to innovation:

1. Be Optimistic; the more you believe you can solve the problem the more you will keep at it
2. Be Clear; never try to solve a problem unless you know exactly what it is
3. Question Your Assumptions; list everything about the situation you know to be true and then question each one
4. Practice Pie-In-The-Sky Thinking; Einstein said “if at first an idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it”
5. Think Of Your Absolute Worst Idea; you might find a terrible idea can be tweaked into greatness
6. Never Take “Yes” For An Answer; learn to say “well, that could be it” and seek more ideas
7. Ask Yourself, “What Would \_\_\_\_ Do?” Fill in the blank with a famous person: Madonna, Donald Trump, Bill Gates - or a mentor or someone you admire.
8. Refuse To Accept Either/Or Thinking; there could be 4 or 5 ways
9. Ask Someone Else; always an option for fresh ideas
10. Walk Away; when you clear your head and go back to it you might see something different

Most of all: have some fun with it! After all, problem solving is like a game.

## GCI’s People News:

**Kathy Murphy** has been selected to serve as an Officer on the Board of Directors for the Greater Philadelphia Professional Convention Management Association (GPPCMA) in 2006.

We’ve welcomed the following new associates onto our Operations team:

**Susan Paschkes** as Project Manager  
**Suzanne Sinatra** and **Toby Frowen** as Project Coordinators  
**Diane McMahon** as Business Unit Manager

And in Sales & Marketing:

**Linda Henry** has come on board as Marketing Representative.

## Gain Buy-In Into Your Vision

You want your managers’ and employees’ day-to-day work to center around the corporate vision. To encourage this, VentureCoach.com offers these suggestions:

- ⇒ Involve people in creating the vision; collect feedback to construct the vision and generate long term buy-in
- ⇒ Walk the talk by being public and being visible; top management may need to change their behavior in response to it - use every opportunity to share the new vision
- ⇒ Sacrifice publicly; give up something that would have been meaningful under the old vision in favor of something valuable under the new vision
- ⇒ Communicate the vision in ways that relate to people’s jobs

**Remember: your actions will say more about your dedication to the vision than anything else.**

## “Operation Joy” For The Holidays!

Over the course of each year many of Gray Consulting’s associates actively participate in the community and in volunteer work. Especially for this year’s holiday season, we decided to join together to make a contribution at a very personal and direct level by adopting a family for the holidays.

2005 has been a year of personal struggle for many families across our country. Working through Child & Family Focus, Inc., a Pennsylvania based non-profit organization, GCI associates “adopted” a family of four who also have a new baby on the way.

Providing toys for a 7 year old girl, many brand new baby necessities, the always-in-demand clothes for two teenagers, and a few “nice to haves” for mom - along with grocery store gift cards - we are pleased to bring a little joy this holiday season to a family in need.

From everyone at GCI: *Happy Holidays to you and yours!*