

World Education Congress 2009

When We Meet, We Change the World

This was my first year attending the World Education Congress in Salt Lake City, Utah – and what an experience it was. Over 2,300 meeting planners and suppliers attended the event held in the Salt Lake Convention Center downtown on July 11-14, 2009. Proof positive that the economy is improving and people are still meeting!

After a few travel delays, I arrived on Saturday afternoon. I packed as many meetings and educational sessions as I could into four days, so I could get the most out of this whirl-wind event! My recap will focus on some of my favorite parts of the entire event.

Sunday morning came too soon, but the session – Your MPI, was not to be missed as a first time attendee. Our “MC” Chris was a great moderator and kept things moving. I even won two tickets to Rendezvous that night!

Opening General Session

Betsy Myers, COO for the Obama presidential inauguration, and senior adviser to the Obama presidential campaign, was by far my favorite speaker during this event. She has a great handle on the industry, and says she will “whisper” in Obama’s ear when she gets back.

According to Ms. Myers, it was the meetings industry that helped President Obama to become one of the most recognized names in the world and ultimately voted in as President. “We used the Internet in a way no one ever had to facilitate meetings,” she said. “I can tell you the good news. Meetings and events elected President Obama to be President of the United States.”

She had advice for meeting planners: Incorporate social media as an essential part of your meetings. “Include a call to action off-line and be willing to give up a little control to your constituents. And be consistent in your messaging. People want to have a voice.”

Rendezvous

Rendezvous was a dance party/mixer event sponsored by Detroit CVB and raised money for the MPI Foundation. The place was packed with WEC attendees – who danced the night away to 70s and 80s (and a few 90’s) music.

Monday's Favorite Sessions

Resume Tips. This was a great session to hear about the new resume design ideas and that we are no longer required to keep it to one page. We were also given tips on how to format our resumes so that when they are emailed, the computer systems won’t reject them based on font or spacing issues.

Self Defense for Women on the Go. This was a session I couldn't pass up! As a meeting planner, I know firsthand how much time I spend walking here and there - and sometimes without a care or second thought as to what might be lurking around the corner! This session was both informative and physical! We were taught hands-on tactics to fend off would be attackers - and that no matter how big or small you may be, you still have the power to escape.

Tip 1: During an attack, make lots of noise, attackers don't want attention drawn to them.

Tip 2: Never let yourself be taken from the primary crime scene to a remote, secluded spot.

Tip 3: Do something! Kick, punch, slap, bite, stomp - whatever it takes! Even if your technique is not perfect, doing something is better than doing nothing. It is more likely your attacker will break off the attack if you fight back!

All good things must come to an end eventually! I wrapped the Congress on Tuesday, with lunch sponsored by next year's WEC 2010 hosts, Vancouver!

I am definitely looking forward to attending next year and catching up with my new MPI friends and colleagues.



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August 2009 *NEws*