

REC 2009 Article
Lauren Huezo, CSEP

I have had the privilege to attend the REC (Regional Educational Conference) since 2002 and I was very excited when I heard the news it would be in New York City as many perceive NYC as the event capital of the east coast. Chapter board members of each of the ISES chapters in the Northeast region meet on Saturday, March 7th for a leadership meeting that updated members on the status of each chapter, ISES International and educated the chapter leaders on policies and procedures.

On Sunday, March 8th the official conference started that featured over 25 educational sessions, over 50 speakers and several opportunities to network with a variety of event professionals. Below are just some highlight take away ideas that I learned at the conference and wanted to pass along to my fellow members of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter.

Catering Trends for 2009: The panel of speakers stressed the return to simplicity in menus, comfort foods and offering family style options. Offsite and hotel caterers both noted they are still working on healthier options, the use of super foods and making green connections in their communities, such as farm to table menus. Looking for some new food ideas, check out www.flavorforecast.com

How You Can Gain a Competitive Edge by Partnering with a Destination Management Company: Always look for a certified DMC in your area to ensure a standard level of service, a firm that pre-qualified vendors and one who can provide the required insurance and financial stability. Work for a hotel, CVB, restaurant or venue? Remember that DMCs in your area act as an extension of your sales force so invite them to your space or alert them of new offerings so they can suggest them to their clients and better sell your product.

Tim Sanders author of *Saving the World at Work* gave an inspirational keynote address that spoke to the current state of the industry and gave suggestions on how to be successful in the current economic environment. Tim reviewed 5 rules to change your mindset and make improvements in your company. 1) Find the source of scarcity thinking in your office and wipe it out. Remove negative thinking from office conversation and spend time in creative ways to create business, not dwelling on negative media or believing this market is beyond one's control. Motivate your staff to be abundance thinkers verse scarcity thinkers. 2) Change the conversation: Talk about what should be and goals only not just what has already happened. 3) Give yourself gratitude. 4) Power in Giving: In these difficult times spread your wealth of knowledge by assisting others with leads for business and help others who might need a job (make a goal to help 3 people this

year). Some other tips from Tim were to always find a component of your event that makes a difference, whether that is to the community or the environment. Even cutting down on overnight shipping will reduce your shipping carbon footprint by 30 times. Check out www.timsanders.com for more details and educational downloads.

The General Session Keynote Brunch held on Monday, March 9th was a State of the Industry Panel Discussion led by some of the top leaders in New York City who spoke of the need for the event industry to make some changes and take action. One directive was to visit the ISES International website at www.ises.com and click on the Industry Advocacy Page to find updates including the proposed TARP regulations. With an expected 247,000 job loss in 2009 and with over 450 companies included in the TARP funding each event professional needs to stay informed and create ways to prove the ROI on every event.

Overall the Northeast REC committee did a great job of offering current educational topics that gave attendees solid action items and ideas along with putting together some great networking opportunities. The highlight networking event included a 1980s night at the Arena Nightclub that featured an energetic live band, 80s décor and giveaways (think jelly bracelets and fingerless mesh gloves) and the group dancing the night away. Please note that the REC 2010 will be postponed since EventWorld 2010 will be held here in the Northeast region in August!! REC will return in 2011.

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(Please note my last name change from Sheehy)

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