

“The Meeting Professional’s Dilemma”

A Play in Three Acts

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In previous Acts, our hero CMP was given the daunting task of planning a large, last minute meeting. After careful consideration, she chose a producer to partner with on the project, to help execute the production elements.

Act III

The Relationship

Building a Partnership

The scene: A living room furnished with a sofa, two armchairs and a coffee table. A flickering fire illuminates the room. In front of the fireplace, a shaggy dog lies curled up for a nap. CMP and her husband, Mr. CMP, sit quietly. Each reads a section of the evening paper. CMP looks up thoughtfully and speaks.

CMP: I’m just not sure it’s working.

Mr. CMP: What’s that?

CMP: I’m just not sure the producer is getting where I want to go. We meet, we e-mail, we talk on the phone, but I’m not sure they hear what I’m saying.

Mr. CMP: Do you hear what they’re saying to you?

CMP: What do you mean? I’m trying to plan a big meeting here and am under tremendous pressure. I need them to listen to me.

Mr. CMP: Of course you do. But remember the first year we were married? It was a little bumpy at times. We had to build good communication habits. If you think this professional relationship has merit, then you need to find the right tools. This has to be a two way street. You have your areas of expertise, and there is no one better, but so do they. This may be a situation where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

CMP: I suppose you’re right. I think I’d better make some notes while I’m thinking about it.

Mr. CMP exits while CMP jots down her ideas. The dog raises his head, considers his choices, then goes back to sleep.

COMMUNICATE

- Communicate clearly and directly and expect to be communicated with in the same manner.
- Avoid jargon and buzz words, and don't let others obscure the conversation with technical mumbo jumbo.
- If you don't understand, ask until you do. Be patient with others so they will ask the questions they need to ask in order to feel comfortable.

SCHEDULE

- Schedules are a collaborative effort. For the timeline to be meaningful, each discipline needs to have input.

INFORM

- Information is power, but it is not a weapon. Empower the team. Share information.
- The more the team understands the full scope of the project, the more ownership they have in the process.

RESPECT

- Respect the abilities and expertise of others.
- Often an outsider can offer a unique and valuable perspective that an insider can't see.
- Expect to be treated with respect as the project leader and as a professional.

EXPECT

- Assign clear and defined areas of responsibility to each team member.
- Be unambiguous in your expectations.

ACCEPT

- Hold yourself accountable for your actions and hold others accountable for theirs.

RECOGNIZE

- Recognize the accomplishments of each team member at every opportunity. This is a powerful motivating factor.

The scene: Uncomfortably small room in the backstage area of a convention center. An exhausted CMP and her assistants sit at a folding table covered with piles of name badges, tote bags, empty soft drink cans, and a partially eaten club sandwich. The Boss enters.

The Boss: Congratulations everyone! I just spoke with the VP of Marketing and she is thrilled with the meeting. She said the branding was spot on. They are already talking about making next year's meeting even bigger! CMP, you built a great team and it showed. Let's go celebrate. I'm buying.

Smiling and laughing, the group exits – heading off to enjoy their victory.

As the door closes and the lights dim, the shaggy dog enters. He jumps up on the table, eats the sandwich, then crawls under the table and goes to sleep.

THE END