

## INTELLIGENCE REPORT

WHAT'S NEWS AND WHAT'S NEXT IN THE INDUSTRY

### Did You Know?

#### Secrets from a Master of Ceremonies

Glenn Thayer is a pro at doing the “Voice of God,” the booming bellow that introduces event presenters with a dramatic “Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome...!”

But Thayer, an emcee who has worked with such diverse groups as Medtronic and the Homeland Defense Symposium, is much more than a great voice. As a “strategic master of ceremonies,” he also works to keep attendees engaged, and ensure content is delivered with maximum impact.

After running an entertainment-production company, Thayer realized there was “a lot more room to bridge the gap between attendees and meeting planners.” His well-honed strategies provide fun and flair to event sessions—and useful insights for meeting planners.

**Social media is your friend.** Like many on the cutting-edge of planning, Thayer understands the value of social media platforms. He encourages attendees to shoot conference video and post their footage to YouTube. At the recent MPI event in Cancun, he utilized live Twitter streams to link in-person and virtual attendees, and to feed questions to presenters. Thayer notes it's

important to know your audience, since different social media platforms appeal to different groups of people. But when done right, he says social media can “engage the audience on a different level.”

**Keep things moving.** According to Thayer, meeting attendees typically remember only 10% of what they hear. To ensure retention, he keeps audiences alert by adding variety and movement—by, say, starting with a speaker, then segueing to video, then engaging attendees in a lively Q&A. He's found particular success with tools to get the audience directly involved in discussion. “Especially if you are able to alter the outcome of the conference,” he asks, “how much more engaged are you going to be?”

**Clarify, clarify, clarify.** After sessions, Thayer will sometimes hear attendees chat about how they didn't understand something a presenter said. He'll then get clarification and address the confusion directly at a later session. The upshot to listening to attendees and addressing their concerns is that if one person is confused about something, others probably are, too. And feeling lost can make it that



Reflections Photography, courtesy of Meeting Professionals International (MPI)

much harder to engage with information later.

**Voice matters.** Employing a trained voice to introduce presenters adds gravitas and professionalism to events, Thayer notes. For planners on a budget, he recommends pre-recording introductions. Otherwise, the voice-overs will likely fall to the production team—and while sometimes they have great voices, sometimes they do not.

As a master of ceremonies who understands the strategies behind engagement, Thayer is both a great voice and a great captivator. By utilizing his tools, planners can ensure their attendees remember, implement and enjoy the content presented. [glennthayer.com](http://glennthayer.com)

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