

What's Keeping Meeting Pros Awake at Night?



Participants at the first-ever Senior Planner Industry Network (SPIN) Conference Put Technology, Budget Issues, and Personal Stress on List of their Most Troubling Concerns

Getting It Together™

Conference Kick-Off and Wrap-Up Session Includes Survey about Challenges

The overall goal of the *Getting It Together* Process, created and facilitated by GrowthWorks Inc., was to help the senior meeting professionals at SPINCon make the most of their three days together to learn from each other, to hatch new ideas, share best practices, and to collaborate on creating personal action plans about how to implement those innovations back in the real world – to really do something with the ideas and inspiration.

Before distributing their *Getting It Together Action Planning Tool*, Brian McDermott and Gerry Sexton from GrowthWorks, asked the SPINCon participants to each identify personal challenges they face in their daily operations. The intention of this process was to get an overall sense of industry challenges, and to help each participant zero in on what they wanted and needed to take away from the conference.

Process: (1) On index cards, participants each described a personal business challenge or opportunity of concern.

Challenges & Opportunities

- Describe a business challenge or opportunity keeping you awake at night

Use Index Card...



(2) To assure anonymity in sharing the challenges and opportunities, GrowthWorks conducted a “human shuffle” of the index cards, asking participants to walk around the meeting room randomly exchanging cards.
(3) Participants then worked in pairs to discuss the major implications of the challenges and opportunities (3 rounds, shuffling between each round to provide opportunities to work with several different people and several different combinations of challenges and opportunities).

Challenges & Opportunities

- Share and compare the issues on your cards
- Put a ★ on back of the issue you agree has the greater implications for successful meetings/events



Approximately 65 senior meeting planning professionals participated in this part of the **Getting It Together** session.

The pressure to continually do more with less – including ways to use technology – and concerns about work-life balance surfaced as broadly felt concerns in the follow-up discussion after the work done in the paired conversations.

These are all the opportunities and challenges we collected from the index cards – arranged by “star rankings” The three-star items were selected in each round of discussion as the challenge or opportunity with the greater implications for delivering successful meetings and events. Those with two-star ranking were selected twice as the challenge or opportunity with the greater implications, etc.



- Learning how social media relates to the meeting industry – what are the benefits.
- Bringing money into the organization when attendance is steadily going down.
- Increasing attendance at events and increasing revenue (which will also help me keep my job).
- Designing a meeting services department for my company – instead of outsourcing work.
- How to manage multiple projects and programs to produce excellent events that meet internal and external needs (time management).
- Continuous business – no lag time. How to give all the time and attention needed to current clientele while actively seeking new business.

- Work – life balance. To do more with less is now the standard... I am burning out. How do I fix that?

- Handling multiple programs at once. I have several clients and they all want top-level attention. How to juggle multiple events at a time?
- Bringing young people to conferences. Baby boomers are retiring and new faces are not returning to conferences year after year.
- Time and turnaround – having time and resources to get everything done.
- I want to learn how to create new experiences for attendees who have fallen into a trap of doing their conferences the same way year after year. They are all executives and sometimes tough to change – even though I sense they want it.
- Keeping up with technology and incorporating it into programs.



- Business challenge: My company is behind in technology. Coming to this meeting is a challenge with only a Blackberry – no smart phone.
- Staying abreast of the latest solid technology and the best way to include that in our events / conferences.
- Technology – staying organized and keeping up with new technologies.
- Compliance in the pharma-world -- meshing domestic compliance with international and each company's own compliance.
- I need more business, but I can't do it all by myself. I need to learn how to bring new staff on board.
- Trying to grow my business – to add a partner.
- Business development – finding new customers in a very difficult market. As a third-party planner, business is very slow.
- Where to start instilling process with my team. I am new to my position as director and have never managed people before. The team is a mess and I am not sure where to start.
- New business – as a new med / marketing company, we are presenting our capabilities and winning business – mainly pharma. It's very competitive.
- Coaching employees for better performance.



- What is the right technology for me getting a new planning business off the ground – smart phone, i-pad, etc.
- How to best identify clients who need my services as an independent planner.
- Finding a full-time association meeting planner job.
- Improving our keynote speaker selection – motivational, inspirational, real-life storytellers.
- Capturing weekend group business at the hotel.
- Creating urgency to complete contracts and finalize sales.

- Grow revenue faster. Explore new product / service offerings? Or go narrower and dig deeper? Ramp up sales team staffing? Or put money into R&D and marketing?
- Helping better predict hotel reservation patterns to help with future hotel room blocks even though I have several years history to work with.
- I have a personal challenge in that I am looking for a full-time meeting planner job. As an independent planner – obtaining business is a challenge.
- We are researching new registration software.
- Increasing revenue streams. My company is struggling – with the economy and its newness – to find ways to make money from different strategies.
- Trying to include all components of a meeting for 700 people under \$700,000 (F&B, technology, fun, video, survey, T&E, online registration).
- What is the best way to reach a potential market audience? In today's high-tech world, what method will get me in the door to sell my company and its services?
- Finding non-traditional ways to reach customers. (Not tradeshow or direct mail or e-mail blasts). What would be meaningful?
- Exporting an object made in the US only – really useful and strangely not existing in that specific model in Europe – could do \$ millions.
- Making a positive impact as a new employee, impressing and inspiring trust in me and being able to maintain life balance with 2 young kids.
- I just need to hire one or two people who will be the right fit for our team. With good experience and great attitudes.
- Scaling and offering [EventMobi](#) to as many conferences as possible.

NO Stars

- Growing our capacity to serve clients.
- Finding qualified planners who might need my services.
- Building credibility for [SPINCon](#) and [SPIN](#).
- Getting clients to realize the value we offer.
- Time management – too many tasks that don't lead to ultimate goal.
- Keeping up with modern technology – working with old equipment.
- Scaling the growth of the company.
- Too many people, events and cities to handle – how to do it all?
- Expanding events internationally.