

# Pat Your Partners On The Back

**By Dana Lynn Hornstein, CMP**

After organizing a successful meeting, you should feel proud of all the hard work you put forth. The late nights and early mornings for the last few months probably did not get recognized by your boss until the attendees and speakers touted your efforts as they walked out the door. But, as any good planner knows, you need to feed the tree that gave you all the fruit. You are an excellent planner, but your suppliers are the ones who make you shine. As in a play, you direct them and they do much of the work; however, who on site will bring the news of their hard work back to their bosses? Here are a few suggestions for spreading the good word:

**1** If there is money in the budget, give your suppliers gift certi-

ates going above and beyond the call of duty along with a handwritten note (remember to pack notepaper and envelopes in your supply box so you have them on hand).

**2** Hold a post-conference meeting with your suppliers at the hotel and invite their supervisors.

**3** Always write a letter to the president of your main supplier's company as soon as you get back, listing the name of the contact and the name and date of your meeting. If your contact had staff, list their names as well. Indicate that he or she was an excellent supervisor. It will show that the supplier was a good worker and a good manager of people.

Also in the letter, list the specific tasks that your main contact did that made the meeting a success. You may also briefly list some of the obstacles he or she had to overcome in order to be successful. Send a copy of the letter to your contact as well as his or her supervisor (it is always good to let the hotel execs know who their best folks are). If a convention and visitors bureau gave you the contact, send a copy there as well. CVBs normally cannot give out recommendations, but it does not hurt to spread the word.

Maintaining a relationship with your suppliers is key to a successful career in meeting planning. With these strong relationships under your wing, you can call on them for advice on how to handle future out-of-state contracts of the same genre if there is a snag; how to handle planning situations that were similar to the one you faced together; and how to deal with suppliers in other states (both good ones and bad ones).

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