Best Practices: Event Design

Events and conferences are areas where there is often lack of diversity and inclusion. To combat this, D&I Task Force gathered some resources for recommendations to ensure diversity and inclusion are considered and integrated to the chapter's event design and planning. The goal is for everyone attending PCMA chapter events feel considered, invited to, welcomed at all events even before the start of the event. The need for all-inclusivity must be included in ALL aspects of event design and planning.

Diversity Chart

- Utilizing the full dimensions of the diversity chart (see below) when planning and designing events.

Cheat Sheet for D&I in Event Planning

- See attached

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Event Diversity: How to make events for inclusive
- 80% of planners consider D&I when selecting venues.
- Fight your unconscious bias – when designing events consider the individual needs of people from a range of ages, religions, disabilities, and ethnicities
- Supply chain – Look for local and diverse suppliers
- Improve accessibility – make the event accessible to all, offer reduced fees for students
- Spend longer on panel selection – consider blind selection for speaker selection process, reduce 'manels'

The State of Inclusion in Meetings & Events
- Select event dates that do not coincide with religious holidays in different faiths
- Conduct site visit to assess the accessibility of the destination and the venue
- Discuss with the caterers about inclusivity goals and needs for the event
- Select speakers/presenters that reflects the diversity of the audience you wish to attract
- Internal planning meetings focused on inclusive event design and planning
- Ensure venues have accessible parking and ramps near the entrance. Doors need to accessible, with curb cuts nearby, and without gravel or grass. Inside the venue, there needs to be a clear path of travel.
- For large events, it is good practice to reserve space for attendees with differing abilities and their guests, or to provide them with early access to the space to avoid getting caught
  in crowds.

A Guide to Planning Inclusive Events
- It is important for individuals and groups planning events to consider how they can make their events accessible and engaging to a broad audience.
- Audience includes people with a wide array of backgrounds and social identities, includes those based upon race, ethnicity, language, country of origin, religion, political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, ability, class, age, etc.
- In designing events, it is necessary to go beyond simply accommodating or acknowledging people's differences, but instead, to create events that are universally designed—accessible to everyone.
- Syracuse University Case Study - Syracuse University's Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) take premise the idea that all learning environments can be designed in advance, and in ongoing ways, to reflect the greatest possible array of students' and other participants' needs,

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preferences, and learning styles. Doing so is not just about meeting the needs of students (and others) with and without disabilities; doing so demonstrates greater inclusion of all individuals and groups. Universal Design may not be fully achievable, arguably, but is, nevertheless, an attitude or approach that is helpful to adopt.

Design Inclusive Meetings

- Design an inclusive event from the very beginning of the planning stage. Begin your planning with the vision of making your event accessible for everyone and post the steps you are taking in your event marketing information.
- Make sure planning committee has diverse representation.
- Budget for interpreters and alternative learning format materials.
- Look for venues that are easy and practical to navigate for people with disabilities.
- Actively seek and hire suppliers that have diverse ownership or leadership, and with a proven track record of inclusive employment practices.
- Menu selection and service styles should significantly affect the inclusiveness of your event. Collect allergies and dietary restrictions from attendees. Accommodate people with disabilities in banquet and room sets.
- Communicate your plans with your participants and provide opportunities for them to communicate their needs to you. Ask for special needs request during registration, marketing materials and graphics reflects D&I, large print/braille/captions, provide places of worship.

Creating More Inclusive Events

- A planning team that is itself already representative of as much social and cultural diversity as possible will yield events that offer a more inclusive environment.
- A planning team that is more homogenous when it comes to backgrounds, experiences and identities will likely have to work more deliberately to accomplish meaningful outreach and inclusivity.
- Program needs to be thoughtfully aligned with your mission to do your best to not exclude others. This does not mean that all messages have to be "safe" from political and social differences, or "represent" every cultural demographic.
- Educating across cultural boundaries necessitates that sometimes some people will feel foreign to an experience or set of information – but the foreignness must not feel like oppression, exclusion, or condemnation.

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Sources

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