



LETTERS FROM THE LEAGUE

League Membership,

We are excited to publish our first *Letters from the League*, a semi-annual digital publication of articles submitted by our CMEC graduates. The list of CMEC graduates continues to grow each year, with 19 graduates currently. Each year the graduates are required to submit articles for publication as a part of the requirement for maintaining their certification. While some of the articles may be published in the League Newsletter, we were looking for another outlet where this information could be shared with our membership. In this edition you will find information on animal rescue, branding, food and beverage, naming rights and project management. We hope these articles will spark an idea, maybe prompt you to tackle something that you put off or forgot about after returning from the Symposium or just find them to be a good source for additional information about our industry.

Welcome to the first edition of *Letters from the League!*
The League Education Committee

ANIMAL RESCUE

By: Joe La Follette, CMEC

One very important aspect of facility management is animal rescue. Do you have a plan in place to deal with an injured animal or even a death? It is not a pleasant topic but if you do not have a plan it can be extremely difficult. To be proactive rather than reactive is the best policy when dealing with animal rescues or removal.

When an animal has to be removed in front of a few hundred or a few thousand people having a well-rehearsed plan makes all the difference. This year the League visited NORCO California and listened to a group that specializes in animal rescue. Norco Animal Response Team (N.A.R.T.) is comprised of a volunteer-based group that is augmented by City Animal Control and Park's Service Staff.

N.A.R.T is the go-to group for any animal rescue from floods to fires and are now included in the Riverside Fire Department Operations. They have attended specialized training in technical and heavy rescue operations that include animal handling and loading, evacuation procedures and the use of specialized equipment to facilitate rescue assignments. We were lucky to have them give us a presentation on removing a horse (dummy) from an arena. They were quick to get the job done. Using their specialized equipment and experienced personnel they were able to exercise their plan of action.

N.A.R.T. holds multiple trainings with their personnel so when the time comes when they are needed, they can execute their plan flawlessly. It's one thing to have a "plan" but if you never practice it you may as well not even have one. You know the saying, practice makes

perfect. This is a very true statement, many times after an actual removal or rescue we go back to the plan and make a change or two based on how it went.

Like any "plan" you have room to grow, but you cannot improve on something you do not have. Start working on a plan today to deal with rescues and removals if you do not have one in place. You can ask other facilities what their plan is to get started. Nothing is worse than trying to stumble through a removal in front of a crowd without a plan.

Having the right equipment is easy and can be cost effective. You don't need to spend a fortune on equipment. Many facilities have improvised ways to remove animals with their own adaptation. Again, look at what other facilities do for equipment. If you create your own or purchase equipment you need to use it and get familiar with it.

During any horse event we have it readily accessible as well as a large tarp to cover the animal or create a barrier between the people working with the animal and the crowd. The quicker you can remove the animal from view the better. Be remembered for have a well-executed professional response rather than the alternative!

Eye Sore to Eye Candy: Elevate Your Brand Online

By: Jennifer Bexley, CMEC

Cassie Roberts Dispenza from Saffire presented a lively and informative session on the importance of your brand online. Cassie has made presentations to The League in the past and always provides exceptional and useful information that can be readily implemented at your own facility.

Cassie describes "Your Brand" as:

- It's a promise
- It's an image people associate with you
- It's a set of core values
- It's an emotion

Two important aspects of your brand online are your logo and the photography that is used.

Logos can be simple, such as the Nike "swish." Logos elicit a feeling or an emotion. For example, you may associate the Waffle House logo with a rough night on the town; or the Ben and Jerry's logo with eating away your feelings. Logos can also have subtle messages through symbolism. For example, within the Baskin Robbins logo is the number "31" for their 31 flavors. Within the Tostitos logo are two people eating a chip with salsa, and the Bronx Zoo's logo has silhouettes of the New York skyline in the legs of the animals. Small changes to a logo can really elevate it and make it pop. Companies are available online that can create a logo for you starting for as little as \$5.

Also important to your online presence is the photography used. Striking photos make all the difference on your website. The photos can tell the story of who you are. The presentation indicated four elements that make a good photo:

- Image Quality – Physical Size
- Effectiveness – Composition, Emotion, Interest
- Message - Message to Your Users
- User Response – Influence Decisions

Tips Cassie gave for photography include not using photos that are too small originally. They will likely get blurred when they are enlarged for your website. She also suggested taking photos horizontal with your phone rather than vertical which many of us tend to do. In addition, it is important to ensure the photos will work for all mobile devices; for example, will the photo look as good on your phone as it does on your laptop. Cassie

indicated there are a variety of ways to take quality photographs from utilizing high quality equipment to something as simple as using rubber bands or binder clips to keep your phone steady. If needed, online resources are available to obtain stock photos.

In summary, your brand is a reflection of you and it is important to take full advantage of it by elevating it to new heights.

Essay and Overview of Concession Food & Beverage

By: M. Jil Goodson, CMEC

As a previous Singer/dancer, Ms. Rey O'Day of Wings of Fame Productions was quick to engage the audience as well as foster participation. She has extensive management experience in the fairs and festivals, food and beverage concessions, and entertainment industries which she graciously shared with us at the 2018 Symposium.

I was particularly interested in this topic since "food" is a constant in conversations with promoters, guests, and most importantly potential clients. While it was stressed that the key role of food and beverage is to provide revenue for the organization and create happy and satisfied guests, Ms. O'Day had much helpful information with regard to the guts of the food and beverage operation.

In order for Food and Beverage to provide revenue, there must be a clear understanding of Contract Models; an understanding of in house vs. contracted out and a clear understanding of new technologies and the fact that concessions are the FRONT LINE. The latter is probably one of the most important factors to understanding how revenue growth ultimately comes from the image your facility sets for your clients.

Understanding your Contract Model is a complex part of the Food and Beverage piece. There are various scenarios that all work within the industry. Finding the right fit for your organization is key and once that model is established, make sure you understand it in its entirety.

Understanding the cost of food and what products have low food costs vs. high food costs will impact your revenue significantly. Understanding the profitability of beverages is another key factor as well as having a clear understanding of any and all sponsorships. This area can be so important with regard to exclusives, etc.

All technology matters are of most importance with regard to your operation. How are your sales rung? Do they directly connect back to inventory control? Do you use social media outlets to promote your operation? Do you utilize electronic signs to push out specials for the day, week, etc.? Does your system provide the reporting that you need to maintain inventory, spoilage, etc.? Understanding new technologies is so important and it becomes more and more paramount. The technology practices are put in place to make functionality easier and more efficient.

One of the most interesting components of the presentation to me is one that we all tend to take for granted. That is the fact that your standard of customer service sets the climate for your entire facility. Your concession team is the ears and eyes of an event. While we think that we have trained our staff and communicated our mission and expectations, have we really done this? Do you take the time to work with your concession team and see how they actually run your operation? Are they friendly? Do they practice good health measures with regard to food safety? Do they want to provide an excellent experience for your client? Do they express a true interest in the quality of the food they are serving? If they are not portraying the atmosphere that we want our guests to experience, your event cannot be successful. Spend time on the ground, do some feel goods with these folks and even listen to their frustrations. If they reflect the Golden Rule you are on your way to success!

Along with the enthusiasm and smiles that you want your team to provide, you want your operation to exude comfort. Do you have a nice clean area to sit and enjoy your meal? Do you provide the extras as simple as straws, ice, plates, utensils, etc., that make your guest

comfortable? Is your stand attractive? Does it create a warm and welcoming feeling? Make sure that it's clean, well signed, and inviting to your guests.

To conclude, the role of Food and Beverage is to provide revenue and create happy and highly satisfied guests. Sounds easy right? If you have communicated to all of your employees your goals, your desire to please each and every customer and you exude these same characteristics, you are off to a good season. It truly is all about treating your guest like you would like to be treated each and every single day.

Thank you Ms. O'Day for taking your time to visit with us and share your knowledge and expertise with our group. You truly made your presentation enjoyable as well as filled with excellent information.

NAMING RIGHTS

By: Rebecca Fyfe, CMEC

As facility managers, we are always looking for ways to increase our revenue. At the Tunica Arena we do sell advertising in certain areas of our venue, but I would like to give a personal thank you to Steve Stallworth from the South Point Arena & Equestrian Center for sharing some photographs from his facility. I specifically liked the creative ideas of some spaces he utilized in the barn for advertising. For example, a specific company bought all of the space in their wash racks to place their logos. That is a fantastic area and for obvious reasons will be utilized by all equestrian participants at your venue. The restrooms were another area in which there was no blank space left. I have typically focused on selling advertisements in our main indoor arena and highway marquee. My eyes were opened to the potential revenue that can be gained in additional areas at our arena.

Besides the barn area, another extremely clever advertising idea that I gained from the South Point Arena & Equestrian Center is to sell the rights to your wireless internet access. This is a very brilliant concept. Just about everyone in today's time has a cell phone with wireless access. Whoever buys the rights to advertise on your wireless has the opportunity to send everyone who logs onto the internet, straight to their home page. I was most intrigued by this idea.

Now it is time to take the knowledge gained from the League Symposium and put it into play. That might be easier said than done, but it could put every facility to a jump start on earning extra revenue. Below is an example of a WIFI sponsor.



Project Management

By: Jamie White, CMEC

Project management is a very important when making upgrades and renovations. We are currently going through a renovation. I am in constant contact almost daily with our construction crews. We have 2 projects going on at the same time with 2 different contractors.

It hasn't stopped any events but has created a few issues. For instance, with the warm up barn renovations. The contractor has allowed us to use the dirt floor while construction has been going on. However, this has caused issues mostly by people being nose-y and wanting to see the upgrades. We have put up panels and barricades along with signage stating please stay out of construction area. It doesn't matter what signage you put up people will always ignore signage and warnings. We have had to block off roads and certain arenas. We currently meeting with each show promoter prior to their event to let them know of the construction. We are giving them a walk through trying to get them on board with relaying to their contestants to stay out of the areas that are marked off. They know that it will be a multiyear renovation. They are seeing the big picture and are pleased to see they we are making great changes. So far the promoters are on board and are happy that we are making improvements.

I would recommend also talking with promoters and contractors together. Make sure that both insurance companies are aware of what is going on.

So far with the contestants being able to see the changes they have been excited and haven't complained too much about the inconvenience of having to walk or ride around the long way to get from barns to the arenas.

Communication is the big thing to be successful during project management. The more you know and the more the promoter and contestants know the easier the adjustments.

Thank you for taking the time to read our first edition of the
Letters from the League!

[Click here](#) for more information about the CMEC Program.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Winter League Footing Academy - January 18-19, 2019

The League Symposium 2019 - January 20-23, 2019

Hosted by the [Expo Square](#) in Tulsa, OK.

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