

BEHIND-THE-SCENES WITH CONFERENCE EDUCATION

By Scott Kangas, CAPP

The IPI Conference Program Committee plays a significant role in bringing our audiences intriguing, up to date, useful information by hand-picking the most engaging, knowledgeable and inspirational speakers for the IPI Conference & Expo.

What does this involve?

Last August, IPI sent out an open call for conference presentations. The deadline for submissions was October 1. By October 2, we had received 82 submissions. We had to winnow these down to 40 presentations for the 2012 IPI Conference & Expo in Phoenix. Proposals were evaluated using the following criteria:

- Overall quality.
- Well-defined focus.
- Timeliness and relevance of topic.
- Practical application of material.
- Presentation skill of the proposed speaker(s).
- Applicability to a national audience.
- Quality of written proposal.

Each committee member read the presentation briefs and the bio of each presenter. We asked the following series of questions:

- Will the information presented have practical applications for most attendees?
- Does the abstract demonstrate a clear and cohesive focus for the presentation?
- Are the identified learning objectives clear, appropriate to the audience, and supported by the abstract?
- Is the topic/content of the presentation timely and relevant to a significant portion of the industry?
- Is the topic/content of the presentation suitable for a diverse national audience?

Overall Quality

IPI's goal is to choose speakers who can effectively communicate their message to a variety of audiences. These questions were asked based on that goal:

- What is the stature of the prospective speaker in their industry?
- Based on your past experience with the speaker, indicate your impression of their speaking skills.
- Do you believe this abstract should be included in the final program?
- Do you believe this presentation is too commercial in nature?

We then were asked to select a potential track category, identify the target audience for each presentation, and provide comments. This information was scored electronically by early November. Now we got into the fun part—putting the puzzle pieces together to create the Conference education program. As we went through them all, we had to think about what highly graded sessions would make for a complete program that touches on different audiences and covers various topics. In the past we have tried to have tracks for those who wish to focus on a specific area (enforcement, customer service etc.), and we tried to continue that practice.

Many thanks to our committee members who put in countless hours on the job this year. We're all looking forward to seeing you in Phoenix!



SCOTT KANGAS, CAPP, is parking and transportation manager at Baylor Healthcare, Dallas, and the co-chair of IPI's Conference Program Committee. He can be reached at scott.kangas@baylorhealth.edu or 214.820.2755.

