

**WELLNESS**

"We recognize the importance of introducing healthier options at food functions, and we pay close attention to attendees' requests for low-fat, vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and low-salt selections. This is particularly important because we are a very large food company."

**TRAVEL**

"Our microsites link attendees to Concur, our online travel booking technology. All our brands are mandated to use it, as well as the preferred travel vendors."

**TECH**

"We recently developed our own meeting management app with DoubleDutch that's tailored to our needs. We can build websites for specific meetings in addition to getting out information about events."

**CSR**

"We might add a guided nature walk to the agenda to get everyone out of the meeting room and moving around outdoors. One of our brands recently incorporated a Walk the City component to a meeting, focused on performing acts of kindness in the host destination."

**MILLENNIALS**

"Their expectations are different from attendees in the past. They like to gather in places other than typical meeting rooms—like the hotel lobby or on a patio. Their use of social media drives a lot of their choices, including what sessions they might attend. Of course, only a segment of our attendees fall into this category. Our senior-level executives have very different expectations and requirements in every aspect of the meeting."

## YOU'VE GOT STYLE

Consistency and cleanliness are crucial for written communication and meeting materials. Here's how to create (and stick to) a style guide.

While planners often don't have degrees in English, it's always a good idea to brush up on best practices for general editing and grammar. After all, attendees need clear instructions on what to do, where to go and when to be there. That's where a style guide comes into play, to be used as a standard for all event communications: emails, social media posts, website updates, and on-site signage and wayfinder messaging.

"Well-written, clear and grammatically correct and consistent copy conveys trustworthiness," says Karen Martwick, editor and content strategist at Travel Portland (Oregon). "Having well-edited and correct materials helps drive attendance." Martwick handles the CVB's print materials, visitors guide, digital and web content, and also has experience planning an annual conference.

The first step to compiling a style guide is to understand it doesn't have to be a major undertaking, says Martwick—"it can be a simple list you create in Word." Martwick shares three tried-and-true tips to help planners create an effective style guide for their event materials. —AD

► Consistency is the single most important element in your communications. So any terms you abbreviate, handle specially or say often deserve special attention.

► What do you find yourself correcting or having to look up frequently? Those are the things to add to your style guide.

► It's helpful to choose a "parent" style guide, like the Associated Press Stylebook. That way you have a reference and you don't have to figure out all the answers yourself.

# WHAT'S ON THE MIND OF A KROGER MEETING PLANNER? (HINT: IT AIN'T GROCERIES.)

Twelve years ago, Angela Buller, CMP, made a spur-of-the-moment decision. On a whim, she applied for (and landed) a meetings internship position with the Cincinnati-based Kroger Company, a 133-year-old Fortune 100 publicly traded corporation with thousands of stores, a couple dozen brands in 35 states and hundreds of thousands of employees. Today as a senior meeting planner on a team of 10, Buller plans and executes more than 300 meetings per year for more than 100 internal clients. —Betty W. Stark