

## WELCOME TO MY WORLD

A snapshot into the lives of the people who hire us

# Get Over Yourself!



"Top 10" list of priorities. (See sidebar.)

It is a humbling experience for speakers to acknowledge that meeting planners are focused on a hundred other details to ensure that events go off without a hitch. For example, the price of a gallon of coffee can fuel heated online discussions, followed by helpful advice. Attrition of hotel rooms can drive meeting planners bonkers. Airline cancellations can create chaos for the entire conference and

lead meeting planners to lose their hair. Do you know what people say about you behind your back? If not, find out. Ask for an honest appraisal. Everyone knows everyone in this business. If they don't know you, they know someone who does and they will do a background check.

Forums offer an incredible learning experience. When you join one, however, check your ego and marketing pitch at the door. You'll gain tremendous insights into the enormous responsibilities of meeting planners who can make organizing and coordinating a stunning and well-orchestrated event look like a piece of cake.

**D**o you ever walk into a conference believing that you have the starring role at the event because you were hired to motivate, inspire and educate the audience?

Well, get over yourself. Even though you are a legend in your own mind, you are a small piece of the pie that meeting planners are baking.

For the last five years, I have participated in the MiForum and McCo online forums, which include meeting planners, destination management companies, hoteliers, suppliers and a sprinkle of speakers. One forum has approximately 2,500 active meeting planners worldwide—the other has even more. Both forums have extremely strict rules about promotion, marketing and selling. In fact, more than one participant has been banned from a forum after one slip. These forums are not places to promote; they are places to learn.

In these online chat rooms, I have learned about meeting planners' real lives and their top concerns. And guess what? Speakers aren't even in their

lead meeting planners to lose their hair.

Here are some tips that speakers can follow to make meeting planners' lives a little easier:

- Show up the day before the event or at least five hours before your scheduled time if you are in the local area. There are no excuses for arriving in the nick of time unless you are the Pope, the President or a presidential candidate.

- This is a relationship business. Meeting planners want to know you, and they want you to know them. Take the time to slowly build a relationship with planners.

- Make sure your reputation sparkles. Meeting planners view speaker bureaus as valued partners and respect their recommendations. Speaker bureaus help present speakers in a favorable light, and really promote NSA and the quality of NSA speakers.

### Top Priorities

Meeting planners have many concerns, but speakers don't even crack the top 10. Here's a list of what keeps planners up at night:

1. The hotel
2. Food and beverage costs
3. Room blocks
4. Travel (flight delays, costs and airline bankruptcy)
5. Arrival of international guests
6. Theme
7. Destination management
8. Staffing
9. Social media
10. Location, location, location!



Former Bronx TBC girl gang member, Pegine (Pe-geen) Echevarria, MSW, is one of 58 inductees into the Motivational Speakers Hall of Fame by the No. 1 motivation site, GetMotivation.com, along with Dale Carnegie, Zig Ziglar and Tony Robbins. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) named Pegine one of 100 Global Thought Leaders in diversity and inclusion. Visit her on [www.pegine.com](http://www.pegine.com).