

“GET READY TO  
COME BACK BETTER  
THAN BEFORE THE  
PANDEMIC.”



# MARK BENSON

## MPI GREATER ORLANDO CHAPTER

- **I learned the meeting industry** from the ground up, starting in food and beverage management, which led to conference services and eventually to sales and marketing at major resorts in Hawaii.
- **There have been many** career highlights, great memories and mentors, but co-founding Applied Meetings & Hospitality Solutions and building our company to where it is today is the pinnacle.
- **I would still like to serve** on the International Board of Directors in a role that benefits MPI and our membership.
- **The pandemic has been** a kick in the \_\_\_ financially, however, our clients have now experienced our above-and-beyond services, to which they have expressed their gratitude and future loyalty. We have also taken the time to diversify and grow our team, which is already resulting in new business opportunities.
- **We have added staff** in preparation for the return of live events. We have advised and prepared our clients as well. We are fortunate to have programs operating in late Q3 and Q4 of this year, and 2022 is solid and growing.
- **I think we have all learned** a lot from the pandemic and expect higher levels of cleanliness awareness and protocols to continue in all aspects of travel, meetings and live events, which is good for everyone and long overdue.
- **I embrace challenges** of all degrees. The everyday challenge is to respect individuals' perspectives, to seek to understand and to give thought to cultural differences—especially when dealing internationally in forming relationships and maximizing the results of those relationships.
- **Every meeting and event** has its own individual DNA. Understanding and delivering to diverse goals and objectives has taught me to be more open minded and a creative problem solver.
- **I have had some** of the best mentors, all of whom had different impacts: Miles Shibata; John Toner; Robert Rippee, MBA, Ph.D.; Cindy Novotny; Manny Coral; and Guillermo Fernando Del Busto.
- **Being involved as a member** is a key element in reaping all the benefits MPI has to offer. Through volunteering, your exposure, networking ability and level of awareness to association opportunities are on the highest level. I have been fortunate to have contributed as vice president of marketing and communications for two terms, director of leadership development, president-elect, president and now immediate past president of the Greater Orlando Chapter. My reputation as a leader and advocate of our industry is known, and MPI has allowed me to be part of something great while giving back, which means a lot to me.
- **Get ready to come back** better than before the pandemic. Be grateful and make continuous improvements that lead to a richer end-user experience.
- **I am blessed** with a diverse and wonderful family and a most loving wife. My passion continues through celebrating culinary creativeness, physical and mental conditioning being a competitive triathlete and cultural tourism experiences.

*Mark Benson, CMP, is president of Applied Meetings & Hospitality Solutions and immediate past president of the MPI Greater Orlando Chapter. He first joined MPI in 1995.*

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