



Convention Services Managers Celebrate Two Decades of ACOM

Originally published January 28, 2008

The Association for Convention Operations Management (ACOM) held its 20th annual meeting Jan. 11-13 at the Westin Seattle, just ahead of the annual gathering of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) in town.

Lynn McCullough, the Princeton, NJ-based executive director of ACOM, said that 250 convention services managers (CSMs), directors, and vice presidents attended the education-heavy event, a slight uptick from last year's 240-strong event in Toronto. "We've definitely met our attendance goals; we've seen a steady increase in attendance for the past three years," McCullough noted.

A central factor in the attendance growth is the preparatory coursework ACOM offers to those pursuing Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation—something that many hospitality suppliers are asking of their events personnel. Of the 480 members of ACOM, roughly 40 percent have CMP designation. McCullough added that ACOM is encouraging younger CSMs to attain certification.

The meeting's highlight was a gala dinner on Jan. 12 atop the Space Needle that celebrated ACOM's 20th anniversary and its past presidents, beginning with William Just, who founded ACOM in 1988. Just raised the profile of CSMs by joining forces in the early 1990s with MeetingNews sister publication Successful Meetings on the Convention Services Manager of the Year Awards.