

**TUCSON PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZERS
GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
May 2009**

The General meeting of Tucson Professional Organizers was called to order at 5:00pm on Tuesday, May 18, 2010 at Ronald McDonald House by MaryLynn St.Germaine.

PRESENT:

MaryLynn St. Germaine, Janet Munson, Wanda Baader, Julie Christen, Jill Janis, Sue Zepeda, Ori Parnaby, Carolyn Sanger, Sheila McCurdy

GUESTS:

No guests.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Janet moved to approved the April 2010 minutes; Julie seconded the motion. The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

BOARD MEMBER / COMMITTEE REPORTS:

President-Elect (Ori) -

No report.

Secretary (Jill):

No report.

Treasurer (Carolyn):

Balance sheet was emailed to everyone along with the agenda for this meeting, one week ago.

Publicity (Nannette):

No report.

Membership (Janet):

She has made up a bunch of new folders for new and potential members. Harold Langer from Merrill Lynch has not joined yet.

Member-at-Large (Shredathon) (Jennifer):

Discussion of what went right and what we could improve for next time, or if we should do something else besides a shredathon for next time:

Plus:

- almost all organizers showed up with enthusiasm
- partnership with Iron Mountain
- partnership with Savers

Minus:

- location?
- short notice
- timing (New Year seemed to work better)
- not enough publicity

Thanks to Jennifer for all the work she did on such short notice!

If we do some actual organizing for a charity next time: we should show “before, during and after” photos and say realistically how long it took and how many organizers it took.

Discussion of possible benefits of participating in the Tucson Book Fair next year.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

SPEAKER:

Stephanie Rising, Canyon Concepts, Business Coaching

How to get people to hire us when they think they can organize themselves?
Potential clients need to be able to get the mechanics of what we do and the value of what we do.

How to get people to see the value, for them, of what we do?

Our competition is with people’s misperceptions or ignorance about what organizers do, rather than with each other, because there’s enough work for all the organizers in Tucson.

What information can we share with potential clients that will have them know that we’re experts in what we do?

Is it worth it to get certified as a professional organizer, or even to join NAPO? (Mixed opinions about this.)

We “create our own credentials.”

It’s a good idea to use “case studies” (form provided).

Get clear on what the client needed, what you did, what the benefit was for them.

Take before and after pictures; get a testimonial.

Put this information on your website.

Help other clients see how the process might work for them.

“Here’s an example of how I helped another client of mine with a similar situation to yours...”

“This person had this goal; here’s what we did; here are the results.”

We need to be pro-active and pre-empt people’s reservations and frustrations and psychological resistance.

Be a very good listener!

Ask leading questions to have people air all their concerns, before they show up as problems.

We need to get the spouse agreeing to the organizing process.

Whenever possible, meet with the husband and get him on board.

Some use the analogy of your organizer being like your personal trainer: we keep them on track.

“I’m here to help you do what you already know you should do...”

“You could do this on your own but you don’t and you haven’t...”

Or you could use the analogy of the organizer as the teacher / trainer / tutor.

We are there to educate them, teach them new habits; we transfer our skills.

“Working here with me, it’s like being in your own personal classroom...”

Many people think they can do their organizing themselves; some few actually can.

For those few, we provide coaching, give homework, help keep them on track while they do it themselves.

Pre-empt their frustrations with themselves and the organizing process.

“You may feel you should be able to do this yourself. But statistically, most people are social learners (learn best when not in isolation), so it isn’t unusual if you can’t do this yourself.”

Also pre-empt people’s financial concerns:

“I know you are concerned about money. It’s also clear that you work much better when we’re together...”

Have the client identify a goal - so they have something to go toward.

At the end of a session, ask them how they feel. Get them to consciously acknowledge how good it feels.

Then you can remind them of this later.

Have a business plan - but a short-term one (look at the next eight weeks ahead).

(Form provided.)

Don’t neglect the non-professional sides of your life (living, loving, learning, etc.).

(Form provided.)

Most frustrating part of this business - the ups and downs of being self-employed, having to spend money to make money, expecting ourselves to be good at all aspects of being self-employed (like being good at marketing, when that is not our “core competency”).

People need to hear about you eight to ten times before your name starts to sink in.

Keep in touch with people, using all means (phone, correspondence, emails).

Three months later, contact them again!

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED at 6:15pm by MaryLynn.

REMINDER - DATE OF NEXT GENERAL MEETING:

Tuesday, June 15, 2010 at 5:00pm

REMINDER - DATES OF ALL GENERAL MEETINGS IN 2010 -

Meetings are at Ronald McDonald House (3838 N. Campbell Ave. & E. Allen Rd. - Bldg 6) unless otherwise noted, from 5:00 - 6:30pm

January 19✓

February 16✓

March 16✓

April 20✓

May 18✓

June 15

July (no meeting)

August 17

September 21 (this meeting will be at another location, TBA)

October 19

November 16

December (no meeting - Holiday Party - date & location to be announced)

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY: Jill Janis, Secretary