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2012 Convention Services Managers of the Year

By Andrea Doyle
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Convention services managers (CSMs) are planners' invaluable resources. They work tirelessly behind the scenes, making sure meetings, trade shows, and conferences go off without a hitch. Three CSMs have been given special attention, as the winners of the 2012 Convention Services Manager of the Year Award, sponsored by Successful Meetings, in conjunction with the Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA) that honors a top CSM at a convention and visitors bureau, convention center, and hotel.



Teri Wiley
Senior Convention Services Manager
Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau

Teri Wiley has slowly migrated south. She started in the hotel industry in 1980 working as a front desk clerk in Cape Cod. From there she made her way to Baltimore and then to Virginia Beach, a city that is now her home. She has watched Virginia Beach transform from a tourist town into a convention destination, and her job has grown during the metamorphosis.

“I love the process of developing a relationship with my planner so that they eventually become my friend, and that relationship helps the final outcome of having a memorable conference,” says Wiley. “I just love the planning process and preparing for all the ‘what ifs!’”

She attributes her success to having a great leader, Al Hutchinson, the Virginia Beach CVB’s vice president of sales and service. “His passion drives me every day.” She says her two greatest accomplishments are her son and becoming a CMP.



Gail Eason
Senior Convention Services Manager
San Diego Convention Center Corporation

The traits that Eason developed as a registered nurse — like empathy, diligence, adaptability, critical and logical thinking, attention to detail, the ability to see a situation through from beginning to end, and tenacity — have helped her excel as a senior convention services manager. She was recruited by the San Diego Convention and Visitor Bureau in 1999 and got transferred to the convention center a few years later. “You have to be a caregiver in order to give good service,” she says.

Eason got so embedded in helping the World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous when it was in San Diego that after the organization lost its meeting planner, she volunteered to help plan this year’s meeting in Philadelphia.

She shows her clients the same care she once showed her nursing patients. “I believe firmly that my position as a client’s convention services manager is not only to service their event but

that I am their advocate here in San Diego,” says Eason. “I let them know that regardless of the challenge, they can count on me to find a solution.”



Yoli Troncoso-Spaulling
Catering and Conference Service Manager
EPIC, A Kimpton Hotel

When Yoli Troncoso-Spaulling was a little girl, she would tell her mom she wanted to be a flight attendant. She eventually landed in the travel and tourism industry, and is now a catering and conference service manager for EPIC, A Kimpton Hotel in Miami. She has been with the property since its pre-opening in November 2008. “I did not envision myself in catering and conference services,” she says. “To this day I am amazed how my career got on this path.”

Sarah Klein, project manager at Valassis Communications, a marketing and media services firm, was one of the many people who nominated Troncoso-Spaulling for this award. Klein was not familiar with Miami, and Troncoso-Spaulling put in special effort for her and her group.

“She proactively offered suggestions on meeting layout, food options, and special touches that made the meeting itself a smashing success,” says Klein.

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