

Movers + Shakers

PROFILE

MICHELLE AVERY MURPHY // FOUNDER & CHIEF GROOVY OFFICER

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You don't run across many top-producer industry vets that have the title of "chief groovy officer," but Michelle Avery Murphy, who carries that designation with the site selection and contract negotiations company she founded, Avery Murphy, is in a disruptive mood, in a groovy way.

Counting more than 20 years in the hospitality industry, Murphy won HelmsBriscoe's prestigious Presidents Club award five times and worked in sales for Wyndham, Starwood and InterContinental.

She founded the Association for Site Selection Professionals in October 2017, and the decision by Marriott International in January to cut independent planner commissions has turned up the heat.

"This is an opportunity to take site selection professionals to the next level," she said. "After the January Marriott announcement, people started to carve out some time to see what I had to say about the future of site selection professionals."

The association currently stands at just shy of 50 individuals representing 35 business entities, with the majority earning commission and some being fee-based.

"The individuals have been referred to us, either by someone in our group or a CVB or hotel representative," Murphy said. "We're really looking at the quality—the cream of the crop of our business, not the numbers."

The overarching goal of the association is to elevate the perception of site selection specialists.

"We're not part-timers, we pay our mortgages," Murphy said of her site selection colleagues. "This is our bread and butter—it's not a side gig."

—Tyler Davidson

PLANNERS

SARAH BONDAR has been promoted to chief operating officer of The Charles Group. In this position, she oversees business and staffing operations as well as managing key corporate and not-for-profit client accounts. Bondar joined The Charles Group in 2013 and brings more than 14 years of experience in planning events and meetings.



The Charles Group, based in Fairfield, N.J., is full-service domestic and international meeting planning and consulting firm.

JAY MARSH joined Steelcase Event Experiences as a business development consultant. In this role, he is responsible for driving new business nationwide, with a focus on the East Coast for the strategic space design company.



Marsh previously spent 13 years with Visit Dallas, where he served as Mid-Atlantic regional director of sales, responsible for building relationships and

strategizing with both corporate and association stakeholders.

Convention Data Services (CDS) promoted **DAVE WUETHRICH** to chief operating officer. In this new position within CDS he oversees all operational aspects of events, from kick-off to post conference. Wuethrich has been with CDS for 18 years and in a management role for 13 years. He led event services and has directly managed a variety of departments, including web development and event services. He founded the product development department and has been instrumental in spearheading initiatives for new products.



SUPPLIERS

Visit Wichita welcomed **KYLIE KENDALL** as convention services manager. In this role, Kendall will be the main point of contact for corporate event planners and association officials. Previously, Kendall was the activities and events director at Terradyne Country Club in Andover, Kan.



InterContinental San Diego announced that **DAVID HALL** will lead the team as general manager at the 400-room hotel set to open in September. He will oversee the hotel's executive committee. Hall previously served as president and chief operating officer for Portfolio Hotels and Resorts.

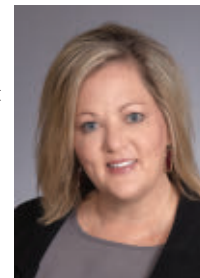


The new-build property, located on the San Diego waterfront, will offer 95,000 square feet of meeting space.

KENDRA P. CLOUGH has been appointed director of conference services for the Doug Pitcock '49 Texas A&M Hotel

and Conference Center, which at press time was expected to open in College Station, Texas, in August with 250 guest rooms and 35,000 square feet of meeting space.

Clough was previously director of conference services for the landmark Woodlands Resort & Conference Center.



FRIDAY WITH JOAN

Unfortunately it sometimes takes a catastrophe like the summer's Branson, Mo., duck boat accident to rethink risk management practices and responsibility for all activities. Learn more in Joan Eisenstodt's blog post "Participant Safety Above All Else: On Water, Land or in the Air."

More: www.MeetingsToday.com

