

INSIDE:

11/MPI AND MO
SHOW UPDATES
12/HOTEL DEALS
ON THE HORIZON?

INFO,
INSIGHT,
IDEAS

OPENING BELL

A revolution is at hand, says of-the-moment speaker and author **TIM SANDERS**. And it's a business revolution that will change the nature of competition. "Companies that contribute more than they deduct from people, community, and planet will make more money and be more attractive as business partners," Sanders writes in his new book, "Saving the World at Work." Soon, he adds, what you pay employees will matter less than how they feel about working for you.

So what are you doing to make the world a better place? It's not a hippy-dippy question anymore.

CSR

CARING IS COOL

Financial & Insurance Meetings: You say that we are at the start of the Responsibility Revolution. What is it?

Tim Sanders: It represents a new consciousness among consumers, employees, and investors. All of them expect the companies with which they do business to join them in taking responsibility for the planet, for giving back to the larger world. If you work in a company that is not socially responsible, it will feel the impact of that decision on its profits and revenues. →

Real men save the
WORLD

TICKER:

→ **Voluntourism** is one of the fastest-growing trends in the travel industry, says David Clemmons, founder of VolunTourism.org., a Web site with resources for tying volunteer activities into travel. To learn more, go to meetingsnet.com and search for "From Attendee to Voluntourist."

→ **Looking for a green speaker?** Eco-Speakers.com, a division of Cupertino, Calif.-based EcoIQ, markets more than 200 environmentally focused speakers of widely varying stripes. For more info, go to meetingsnet.com and search for "Green Speak."

HOW TO PUT CSR ON YOUR AGENDA

***Find a corporate sponsor inside the company.** "Google your own company along with phrases such as 'sustainability' or 'social responsibility,'" says Tim Sanders. "You'll find leaders at your company talking about current efforts. Reach out to them. Offer them the chance to partner with your event to increase participation in the company's efforts."

***Talk to sales managers about how community involvement increases retention of their top producers.** "My research says that if a sales professional gets involved in a company cause or outreach program, it takes a lot more money for a competitor to lure him or her away," Sanders says. "That's important to think about with the economy the way it is."

***Use a CSR/green speaker as your motivational keynote.**

***Devote a traditional presentation slot to a local community service activity.** Call the local convention and visitors bureau for a list of worthy recipients. If you do choose a local activity, pick one that aligns with the company mission or values, Sanders advises. After the event, you could have an executive or outside speaker talk about the importance of making a difference at work. "It will close the loop and help spur innovative ideas back home, after the event," Sanders says.

FIM: Where's your evidence that this revolution is at hand?

Sanders: Today 65 percent of Americans are willing to switch to a brand associated with a good cause if price and quality are relatively equal. According to global consultancy The Work Foundation, two thirds of this year's college graduates claim they will not work for a company with a poor reputation for social responsibility. I've talked with dozens of recruiters, including many who work in the financial industry. They tell me that a company's reputation as a good corporate citizen is a tie-breaker when hot candidates get multiple offers. Many of the best candidates are avid social networking site users. They care about their reputation, and where they work is a big part of it. One recruiter to Wall Street told me, 'To get the best managers, you'd better make sure your company is Facebook-worthy'—meaning that your employees would be proud to list your company as their employer on their profile page.

FIM: It's easier than ever to find out exactly what companies are doing—good and bad.

Sanders: Little is secret in today's society. Your company's actions and intentions will be found out and posted somewhere on a blog or a bulletin board for all to read and forward. Smart job candidates will find out more about you than you will about them.

FIM: How is this going to affect the financial services industry in particular?

Sanders: There will be a war for talent in all industries. In financial services, there is an impending shortage of top financial advisers and managers. This will be acute by 2012 and a catastrophe by 2015. Around 25 percent of all financial managers active in 2000 will have retired by 2012 and will have been

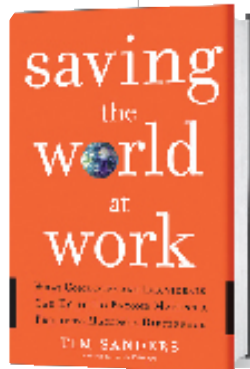


replaced by someone 25 years younger than they are. These kids are completely rewired. They were raised on recycling and Habitat for Humanity. They will ask questions of companies such as, 'What are you doing to protect the environment?' Right now, companies compete for employees based on their financial compensation plans. But within two years the social compensation plan—the purpose that comes with your paycheck—is going to be more important.

FIM: In your new book, you encourage employees who want to make a difference to become "saver soldiers" for the cause by "teaching, not preaching." Meeting planners seem well positioned to take on this role.

Sanders: I think meeting planners are the executive producers of the business and association world. They hold the keys to shaping culture and inspiring social innovations at work. Why? They influence

the theme, content, speakers, and schedule. They pick the venues, design the experience, and report on the results. That's a lot of power! I've found that meetings are usually the social operating system of an organization. They are the golden opportunities to drive home the message: We can do well by doing good. —Alison Hall



TICKER:

→ Environmental and meeting organizations are working together to set green meetings guidelines, including standards organization ASTM and the CIC's Accepted Practices Exchange Commission. For details, go to meetingsnet.com and search for "Setting the Standards."

→ The recently formed Association for Green Meetings & Events, a non-profit association, has developed the first certification for planners and suppliers interested in greening their meetings. Go to meetingsnet.com and search for "New Green Certification" to learn more.

Photographs By Curt Goodwin

MPI & MO SHOW UPDATES

Meeting Professionals International's World Education Congress in August drew a record-breaking attendance of more than 4,300. Among the news from MPI: The association plans to launch a Future of Meetings Taskforce, which aims to identify goals for meetings of the future, and the Meetings Executive Advisory Council, which will advise MPI leadership on the direction of the association. As well, MPI announced A Community Knowledge Plan, a project that will outline seven milestones for pursuing a career in the meetings industry. Each milestone will be marked with a certification or educational opportunity. Plans are also in the works for a revamped Global Certification in Meeting Management program. MPI launched the CMM, an advanced-level designation for meeting professionals, in 1995.

Plenty of education is in store at The Motivation Show, September 23 to 25 at McCormick Place in Chicago. This year's keynote speaker is Chester Elton, co-author of several leadership books including the bestseller *The Carrot Principle*, and *The 24-Carrot Manager*. And don't miss a panel of industry thought-leaders on Tuesday, September 23, from 10 to 11:15 a.m.—including Louann Cashill, CMP, CMM, meeting services manager, Toyota Motor Sales; Beth Cooper-Zobott, director, conference services, Equity Residential; Cynthia Duggan, CMP, CMM, manager, meetings and events, Abbot Nutrition International; Brenda Anderson, CEO, Society of Incentive & Travel Executives; and Scott Graf, president, BCD Meetings and Incentives—sharing their views on such topics as procurement and

strategic meetings management. MeetingsNet Editorial Director Betsy Bair and *Corporate Meetings & Incentives* Editor Barbara Scofidio

are session hosts. You can help determine the exact content of the session in a pre-show poll: To register, visit www.motivationshow.com.

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SHOP TALK

BETTER DEALS ON THE HORIZON?

Marriott International's second-quarter profits fell by 24 percent and second-quarter profits at Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide fell by 16 percent. Planners want to know: Is the long-running hotel seller's market finally over?

It all depends on the location, says Bjorn Hanson, clinical associate professor at New York University's Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports Management. "Markets like New York still have occupancy rates of over 80 percent. . . it's still a seller's market there."

Jan Freitag, vice president for global development at Smith Travel Research, agrees that "the top

10 markets are still going to see a seller's market." Secondary locations, however, particularly those with a lot of new properties in the pipeline, will give planners "easier negotiating opportunities."

Second-quarter numbers were "slightly weaker than anticipated," says Hanson, but observers need to remember that in autumn the hospitality industry begins to rely more on business travelers than leisure travelers. "And business travel has held up surprising well—better than expected," he says.

"Business has already reacted to the cost of travel," adds Hanson. "What we do see happening is that companies are cutting back on small meetings, the kind that have 10 to 15 attendees. Instead they're using teleconferencing or videoconferencing, or using office space. For larger meetings, they're sending fewer attendees for fewer days."

Freitag says there are opportunities out there for planners beyond room rates. "From a group perspective, I think there's an opportunity to negotiate up," he says. "Instead of having to pay for bottles of water or Internet service in addition to rooms, there should be opportunities to have those services incorporated in the room rate." —*Michael Bassett* ■

