



The Meeting Medic

Jeff Berger offers CPR to help planners stay alive in the event industry. BY SELENA FRAGASSI

CONFERENCE PLANNING RESOURCES, LTD. (CPR) WAS BORN in May 2007 when president and hotel marketing vet Jeff Berger found it less than satisfying to simply survive on the status quo. Rather, he wanted to revive his career and more importantly, "bring life to meeting and events." In so doing, Berger created a business model that focuses on highly trained and qualified sales associates who can offer planners a full range of a la carte planning solutions and services, ranging from RFP development to destination research, site inspection, rate and contract negotiations, event management and transportation. By partnering with vendors and suppliers who are carefully selected by CPR, Berger says planners can trust that they are receiving the best recommendations so their bottom line doesn't flat-line.

ILM+E: What advantage does CPR provide to planners during event production?

JB: CPR negotiates state-of-the-art contracts with hotels that best suit the planner's needs, saving them time and money. We help both sides to manage risk while developing lasting, profitable business relationships.

ILM+E: How does CPR help planners adapt to new and changing trends in the industry?

JB: Meeting planners who may not be able to afford a full-service event planning company benefit from the a la carte selection of services provided by CPR's lifeline partners who have the same core values as CPR: being fair and equitable. With our event planning company, for instance, there are no markups or surcharges for any product or local service our client needs to fulfill the needs of the program. This is unlike other third parties. Our client sees the actual true cost for all products and services acquired to support their conference. Additionally, we identify all partners to our planners from the onset so it is clear who is delivering the human resources and who is handling what services.

ILM+E: What are the highlights you see in CPR's near-term future?

JB: Currently, we are focused on a new level of technology that will be launched later this year, which will transform the way clients collect and review hotel proposals. Also our call center will continue to expand with dedicated projects designed to lend database cleansing and lead generation service support to hotels and destination bureaus.

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