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Meetings Industry Associations Change Names

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Two meetings industry associations, both managed by Creative Marketing Alliance, have rebranded to better reflect new strategic directions brought on by changes in the meetings industry. The Association for Convention Operations Management has changed its name to the Event Service Professionals Association, while the Association for Convention Sales and Marketing Executives rebranded as Convention Sales Professionals International.

The 20-year-old former ACOM, which serves the event and convention services industry, refocused its mission in mid-2011 to better recognize the various roles and responsibilities of its current and potential membership base. "We have created a new name and brand that accurately embraces the diversity of the roles our members play and their evolving responsibilities in their venues and cities," said Eric Blanc, CMP, president, ESPA, and director of sales and marketing, Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, Fla. "The meetings industry continues to evolve, and this new direction will enable our organization to stay current with our membership and industry trends, while broadening our membership base to professionals that manage all types of events, not just conventions."

ESPA, which has been managed by CMA for the past six years, will offer expanded content at its annual meeting January 6–8, 2012, in San Diego. It is right before the Professional Convention Management Association annual meeting, Convening Leaders, which runs January 8–11 in San Diego. For more information, visit the new ESPA Web site at www.espaonline.org.

Princeton Junction, N.J.–based CMA also started to manage CSPI six months ago. The association's new name is more inclusive of the various roles of members. "Through the new brand, we've opened up this opportunity to professionals at all levels—not just executives," said Yulita Osuba, CMP, president, CSPI, and senior director, sales marketing, event management, and exhibitor services, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. CSPI's new strategic direction will place an increased focus on facilitating the key relationships between destination marketing organizations and convention center sales and marketing professionals, she added. Go to the new Web site, www.cspionline.org.

In both cases, the changes in strategic direction are the result of the evolution of the meetings industry and the roles of members over the past three to four years, explained Meghan Higgins, CMA spokeswoman. Given those shifts, each association's leadership went through the process of analyzing the best strategic path forward for both organizations and ultimately decided that rebranding was necessary in both cases.

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