

Host Tamra Gaines recording MPItv videos at the Dallas studio of Grit Productions & Expositions.



‘An Infinite Circle of Creativity’

MPI partners with Foster+Fathom and Grit Productions & Expositions to create “must-see” industry education for its refreshed **MPItv** video series.

BY **BLAIR POTTER**

IT WAS TIME FOR A CHANGE. MPI NEEDED a new, fresh direction for MPItv, and it needed partners to bring it to life.

They didn’t need to look far. The right people for the job were already longtime MPI partners and collaborators, and they were also Dallas-area neighbors: Foster+Fathom and Grit Productions & Expositions.

“When Drew Holmgreen (MPI chief experience officer) approached Kelly Massey (Grit Productions & Expositions managing partner) and I last year about his vision for a new format for MPItv, we understood the opportunity being presented to continue our partnership with MPI as strategic contributors to three of its signature member activations and to contribute to

where the industry is and where it’s going from a technology standpoint,” says Steven G. Foster, CMP (MPI Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter), managing partner of Foster+Fathom and recipient of MPI’s 2024 RISE Award for Meeting Industry Leadership.

This was a natural progression of a relationship with MPI that had been evolving since 2020, according to Foster.

“We first partnered together on the digital trajectory for MPI’s Chapter Leadership Summit (formerly Chapter Business Summit),” he says. “Transitioning that longtime MPI volunteer chapter leader training event from in person to digital was a big lift for everyone involved, especially during the pandemic. It was going to require a commitment from people dedicated to leveraging evolving technologies and delivering a new and meaningful experience for attendees, and there were a lot of moving parts and challenges to overcome. I know everyone involved—MPI staff, the Grit team and certainly me as someone who had participated in many chapter leader events, as both a member and presenter—learned so much about what was actually possible when we embrace and engage with emerging

digital technologies in the meeting and event industry. The next year, we took the lessons learned and applied them to producing Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID).”

A FRESH APPROACH

The new MPItv video series explores the dynamic world of meetings and events with fresh insights and invaluable knowledge from industry experts. Host Tamra Gaines, a 30-year industry veteran and 28-year member of MPI, brings her passion for peer collaboration, fostering education and chapter and committee engagement.

Production on the new MPItv began in earnest at MPI’s World Education Congress (WEC) in Louisville, Ky., this June. Subject matter experts were interviewed onsite, discussing the various MPItv monthly themes we’re covering in 2024 such as learning, travel, money and innovation.

“If you attended WEC Louisville and spent any time at the MPI Market, you saw the ‘new look’ of the MPItv set,” says Kelly Massey, managing partner of Grit Productions & Expositions. “That was a major investment in time, talent and treasure to showcase what MPI members can expect this year, a fresh approach to engaging with their colleagues online. Back home in Dallas, the Grit Studio was also being reconfigured to ensure delivery of relevant and meaningful content from a wider range of industry experts. The look and feel of MPItv is one we’re very much excited about, and we hope the monthly programs will become the most important three minutes of ‘must-see’ industry education.”

Gaines, who has served on various MPI chapter committees and as chapter board president, says she is a big believer in “buy MPI” and has created lifelong friendships and mentors through MPI.



ABOVE: Recording MPItv interviews onsite at MPI’s World Education Congress in Louisville, Ky.

BELOW: Amani Roberts, host of the WEC Digital Experience, speaking with Kelly Massey of Grit Productions & Expositions and Steven Foster of Foster+Fathom.

“As MPItv host, I aim to leverage my experience and dedication to our industry to represent our membership in a relatable and authentic way,” she says. “Our industry is rich with subject matter experts, and the experiences we create for others hold immense value. MPItv provides a platform to showcase these knowledge contributors, offering valuable insights and inspiration. My hope is that viewers find the content enriching and that it fosters professional growth and development.”

GO WITH THE FLOW

Curtis Smith, director of video production for Grit Productions & Expositions, says that while the final shoot is where all the planning comes together for a project like MPItv, the team always starts with the discovery process, asking as many questions as possible.

“It’s our goal to understand the overall purpose and desired outcome for the project, first,” he says. “From this point on we look at the problem with creative solutions and begin pre-production. In this phase, we start breaking down the opportunities we have to bring the stories to life—scheduling calls, creating the visual looks and animation elements and planning the actual shoot itself. The shoot is the easy part, often made easy by our planning—it’s just execution at this point.”

Charlotte Miles, vice president of productions for Grit Productions & Expositions, believes the whole video production process is “an infinite circle of creativity.”

“Creativity is at the forefront of our roles every day,” she says. “We are asked to provide creative solutions for clients in many different ways. That can be through graphic design, video scripts, set design, wardrobe, location choices, crews and more in order to bring the project to life.” ●

