Workers' Comp

Top Five Reasons You'll Love DMEC 18

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Can't-miss events abound at this year's premier disability conference

By Christi Doe, Director, ECN, a division of Genex Services

Next week, one of my favorite industry events of the year kicks off in Austin, TX, as the Disability Management Employer Coalition (DMEC) hosts its annual conference Aug. 6-9. As a DMEC member for the past 25 years, including stints on the National Conference Committee, I've witnessed the dramatic changes this conference has undergone in both content and attendance. The organizers pack a lot of exciting activities into three-and-half days, so whether you're a first-timer or an annual attendee, here are the top 5 reasons you'll love DMEC18.

1) *Sessions:* One of the biggest challenges you'll face at DMEC18 will be choosing among 40-plus outstanding sessions on the agenda. This starts with the keynote featuring Nyle DiMarco, winner of *America's Next Top Model* and *Dancing with the Stars*, on Aug. 6. I look forward to hearing and learning from this extraordinary individual as he shares his experiences in overcoming barriers as a deaf man to meet his goals. I also look forward to hearing from Rachel Shaw of Shaw HR Consulting, who will tackle the hot topic "Mental Health in the Workplace: The Invisible Disability, Now Visible" on Aug. 7.
Don't miss: On Aug. 7 at 1:30 p.m., my friend Amy Kelly, MS, CRC, Director, Absence Management, United Airlines, and I will present an informative session "Seems Simple, But: The Complexities of Reasonable Accommodation." Amy's unique experiences will surely offer helpful information you can apply in your own practice.

2) *Networking*: With more than 700 absence and disability professionals scheduled to attend, you won't find a better opportunity to meet with your industry peers. But it's not just the quantity of professionals that make this conference great, it's the sophistication and experience of the individuals who attend. These are true decision makers with subject matter expertise and a thirst for knowledge. Networking at DMEC has allowed me to make lifelong friends as well as many valued clients.
Don't miss: The opening reception on Monday night always provides a great opportunity to say hello to old friends and meet and greet newcomers.

3) *Exhibit Hall:* The exhibit floor offers a wonderful showcase for exclusive products and solutions featuring more than 60 exhibiting companies. Plus, complimentary evening networking events allow you to make connections both on and off the floor.
Don’t miss: Be sure to stop by and say hello to my colleagues and me at the Genex and ECN booths # 401 – 403.

4) *Social activities:* Busy days of learning and networking at DMEC are followed by enjoyable activities that allow conference attendees to relax and party!
Don’t miss: DMEC’s famous Wednesday Night Party is always a blast!

5) *Austin:* I am definitely looking forward to exploring Austin’s food, art and music scenes. The Texas capital is one of the trendiest cultural cities in the country, and the current forecast is calling for “cooler” days (temps dipping below triple digits) so it should be a great opportunity to explore the “Live Music Capital of the World.”
Don’t miss: I’m summoning up courage for this one. Austin is home to the largest urban bat colony in North America (1.5 million!). At dusk by the Congress Avenue Bridge, the bats can be seen emerging for their nightly excursions to rid the city of pesky insects. Apparently, it’s a sight to be seen!



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