

The Professional Summarizer

THIS GUY WILL ADD ZIP TO YOUR MEETING OR EVENT.

Dale Irvin, CSP, is furiously taking notes offstage while listening to one of the head honchos at Caesars Entertainment welcome attendees to the recent Las Vegas Educational Experience. Irvin has served as emcee for the company's last 10 events.

"It's my job to recap what you should have learned had you been paying attention," he tells the group of about 200 meeting planners when it's his turn to speak.

What's amazing is that he does it on the spot, in real time, with only the time it takes to listen to a speaker. He does this throughout the entire three-day meeting.

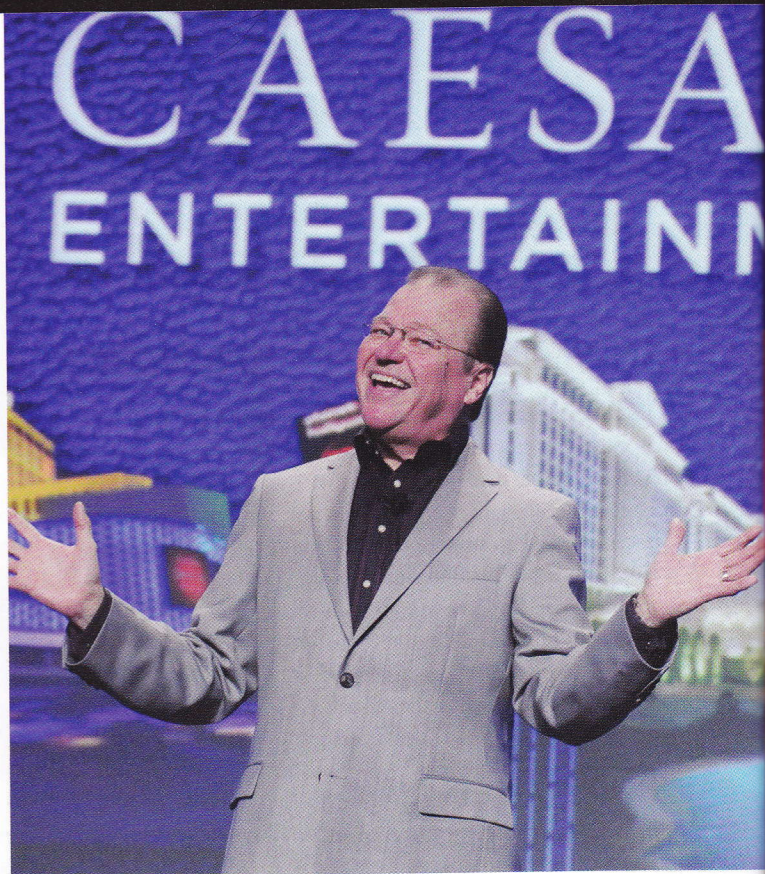
"I don't hear anything in advance," he said. "But I've been doing this my whole life. I was the kid in the back of the room making fun of the teacher."

He also spent a year and a half at The Second City improv club in Chicago, where you really have to think on your feet. But after 10 years in comedy and being on the road "too many days a year," he missed his daughter, Danielle, now 29. His wife, Linda, is a teacher who edits everything he writes.

"She has good comedic timing," he said.

He discovered the corporate market 15 years ago, and one of his clients coined the phrase "professional summarizer" to describe him. He has been hired by planners from companies across the board—from Hewlett Packard to Mobil Oil to Anheuser-Busch. He's also worked on speeches for others, such as Harvey Mackay, a popular business speaker who, he says, "Just needed his speech punched up."

Irvin is different from most speakers in that he attends the entire meeting—from meals to seminars to the final night's banquet. He'll follow every speaker and every act and make the funniest observations about each one—keeping a meeting fresh and fun. His summarizing sometimes raises eyebrows when he crosses the line ever so slightly. As a speaker, he reaches more than 100,000 people a year



with his message of laughter therapy. And Irvin is a member of the CPAE Speaker Hall of Fame.

"Attendees rush from their break just to hear Dale summarize the previous session," said Jordan D. Clark, vice president of sales for Caesars Entertainment. "They enjoy it because he's funny, but what is really happening is that he is driving home the main points of the last speaker. I can't imagine doing an event without Dale."

While Irvin enjoys the pressure of having to think on his feet, when he gets home he crashes.

"I usually do nothing the weekend after an event. I'm exhausted."

Still, he creates "Friday Funnies" each week that are emailed to subscribers and can also be found on YouTube.

"I take odd stories from the news and give my twist on them."

For the Caesars Entertainment event, he recorded his Friday Funnies on Veterans Day in his hotel room. He joked that he might be the only one in Las Vegas not gambling or getting married, as the hotel was booked with couples coming to tie the knot on 11/11/11. He offered that gambling was a lot like marriage.

"If you don't play your cards right, you just might lose your house."

To sign up for *Friday Funnies* or to contact Dale Irvin, visit www.daleirvin.com.

JENNIFER JUERGENS is a veteran meeting and event industry journalist and former editor in chief of *Incentive* magazine.