



Being a morning person isn't a prerequisite for success in the meetings and events industry, but it certainly doesn't hurt. Fortunately for Geoteaming CEO John Chen, "the early bird gets the worm" is a lesson he learned in childhood, delivering morning papers on his route in Stockton, California. He channeled that work ethic into a career as a sponsored amateur skateboarder, before graduating from the University of California at Santa Barbara with a computer science degree and moving to Seattle to work at Microsoft.

Twenty-one years ago, Chen parlayed his love of technology to found Geoteaming, an award-winning company that helps people learn to work together through organized play. Since its founding, Geoteaming has planned more than 1,800 team-building events, many of which involve several thousand people. Chen is also the author of "50 Digital Team-Building Games" (available at wiley.com).

"One of my favorite stories is organizing a 3,000-person team-building event for two collaborating pharmaceutical companies," he says. "During that event, more than 60 people worked together to help teams bat in the visiting team's batting cage, shoot T-shirts at targets in the stands and build the new company logo out of 4,000 cans of food."

Chen, a self-described "big kid," says that what he loves about the industry are the people. "I've gotten to meet some of the coolest people I know. ... I can walk around almost any industry event and know someone. I love that I've gotten to know so many different kinds of businesses by working with them."

His advice for anyone looking to work in the industry is first to find out if it is something they love to do by joining Meeting Professionals International, volunteering for a local chapter or interning and meeting as many people as possible. "Learn to go to as many industry-learning events [as you can], and then apply what you can at your next event," Chen says. 🍷

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THE BUSINESS PLAYGROUND

John Chen is playing games with your company.

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