

Call for Papers
For a one-day virtual symposium on:

“What Does It Mean to Retreat?”
Business Retreats at the Crossroads of Performance and Religion

We invite scholars to examine with us the religious and theatrical features of “retreat” and “retreating” in business by presenting position papers (7-10 minutes) on the question “What does it mean to retreat?” The papers will be part of a day-long virtual symposium that includes paper presentations and group discussion, with the goal of bridging management studies and the humanities to explore how ritual and the performing arts are used by and can benefit workers and organizations. In keeping with the symposium’s interdisciplinary intent, papers can use any theoretical perspective(s) and research methods and can analyze “business” and “retreat” broadly so as to encompass a broad range of cultural and historical contexts.

The symposium, which will take place on **Friday, October 15th, 2021 via Zoom**, launches an eighteenth-month project on “Business Retreats at the Crossroads of Performance and Religion” funded by the University of Alberta’s Kule Institute for Advanced Study and the University of Calgary’s Calgary Institute for the Humanities. The project will offer seminars and symposia to examine the phenomenon of business retreats and engage an international network of scholars. Our hope is that this transdisciplinary research will shed light on how individuals, communities, and businesses continue to reimagine themselves through periods of structured retreating from daily life and interrogate how business retreats function as discursive practices where creativity, imagination, and social practices construe new realities. The symposium is an exploratory event to launch the project.

Symposium Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Tina Dacin

*Stephen J.R. Smith Chair of Strategy and Organizational Behavior
Smith School of Business, Queen's University, Canada*

Possible directions for exploration include, without being limited to:

- How do retreats use temporal and spatial frameworks (by taking place in special or distant locations, by lasting for extended periods of time, etc.)?
- What kinds of outcomes do businesses hope to achieve through retreats (learning new skills, personal or organizational transformation, relationship building, etc.)?
- What kinds of hierarchies or power relations do retreats instantiate, subvert, critique, or maintain (for example, by designating a coach, by temporarily ignoring boss-employee structures, etc.)?
- What kind of balance between individual work and group activities do business retreats use, and why?
- How do business retreats draw on theatrical skills and repertoires (role-playing, rehearsal, scripts, costumes, props, etc.)?
- How do business retreats incorporate ritual elements (meditation, rite-of-passage structures, spiritual or spiritualized practices, etc.)?
- How do business retreats allow organizations to use symbols, metaphors, and traditions (company lore, official value statements, mascots, etc.)?
- How have business retreats changed over time?
- How do business retreats differ across cultural contexts?

Please send proposals of one page or less, along with a CV, by **Friday, August 13th, 2021** to:

joy.palacios@ucalgary.ca

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We are also happy to answer any questions you might have about the symposium or the larger project on “Business Retreats at the Crossroads of Performance and Religion.”

Organizers:

University of Alberta	University of Calgary
Stefano Muneroni, Ph.D. Associate Professor Department of Drama	Joy Palacios, Ph.D. Assistant Professor Department of Classics and Religion
Emily Block, Ph.D. Associate Professor, George M. Cormie Professor of Business, Department of Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Management	Alice de Koning, Ph.D. RBC Teaching Fellow, Teaching Professor, Haskayne School of Business