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BE A LEADER, NOT A MANAGER

Time is money, and a good CEO doesn't spend it micromanaging employees and board members. Instead, successful executives should spend their time setting strategic goals and building strategic relationships — leading, not managing.

Read leadership advice from American Dietetic Association's CEO Patricia Babjak and Appraisal Institute's CEO Fred Grubbe, MBA, CAE. [Read the article here.](#)

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HOW TO... CULTIVATE SUCCESSFUL BOARD RELATIONSHIPS

William St. John, CAE, president and CEO of the Dietary Managers Association, shares five tips for building strong connections to and within a board of directors. [Read Bill's tips.](#)

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INTERVIEW WITH JACK RIVES


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Destinations nationwide are struggling to make ends meet. Here's what associations need to know about doing business with cash-strapped CVBs, and what they can learn from cities in order to address their own mission-critical challenges. [Get advice from Visit Baltimore.](#)

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A result of the savings and loan crisis of the late 1980s, the Chicago-based Appraisal Institute was established in 1991 when two associations, the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers and the Society of Real Estate Appraisers — the former for residential appraisers and the latter for commercial ones — merged in order to promote their common industry and advance their shared profession. According to Appraisal Institute CEO Fred Grubbe, MBA, CAE, it was a necessary union, but also a challenging one.

“You had to accommodate two different cultures when you brought those organizations together,” says Grubbe, who joined the Appraisal Institute in 2007. “Unfortunately, the leadership at that time had to make some short-term decisions that had long-term consequences, such as bloated staff, inordinately high budgets, and a sudden rise and then gradual fall in membership.”

Because it’s an amalgamation of two organizations with two constituencies, the Appraisal Institute has been struggling with its identity for nearly 20 years. The question at hand: Is it a trade association that’s all things to all appraisers, or is it a professional society that’s one very specific thing to one very specific group of appraisers?

“This identity crisis has gone on and on for a long time, and the organization through its strategic planning process is finally getting to a point where it’s going to make a decision about who it’s going to become,” Grubbe says. “We’re very close to making that decision, and it’s going to make a world of difference for the future of the profession for the next decade and beyond. Although the decision may have an adverse impact on one constituency or the other, it’s a decision that has to be made. When you spend all your time trying to please everybody, you please nobody.”

The Appraisal Institute has sharpened its focus since Grubbe came on board. “I’m not an appraiser; I’m an association professional,” he says. “As a result, I’m impartial. I don’t have a dog in this hunt. It wasn’t up to me to come in and say, ‘You will be this,’ or, ‘You will be that.’ It was my job to help my board develop and articulate its arguments, and to play an advisory role through which my staff and I provided the data and information that was necessary for the board to make a knowledge-based decision.”

Like the Appraisal Institute, all associations face challenges — and need an effective CEO to help solve them. Not with force, but with finesse. Like Grubbe, successful association executives must therefore learn to impact their board

without influencing it. CEOs, in particular, must educate and communicate, not dictate and regulate. In other words: They must learn to *lead*, not *manage*.

What's a Leader?

Because she's been both, Patricia Babjak knows well the distinctions between "leader" and "manager." CEO of the Chicago-based American Dietetic Association since January 2009, she joined the association in 1975 as assistant coordinator of its Commission on Dietetic Registration, then gradually rose to the CEO level over a 34-year-period during which time she turned good management skills into excellent leadership skills.

"Part of my success going from a manager to a CEO is that I welcome challenges," Babjak says. "I love to try new things, so I deliberately expose myself to new situations and ideas. I have a tendency to always ask, 'What if?' and I think that's helped me be a better leader."

Indeed, their enthusiasm for challenges and speculation is what separates leaders from managers, who typically are more comfortable implementing solutions than they are imagining them, according to management consultant Stephen Balzac, author of *The 36-Hour Course in Organizational Development*. "At a very fundamental level, the job of a manager is to look inward, developing individual employees and helping them build their strengths," he says. "The job of a leader is to look outward, focusing on the organization and building excitement and enthusiasm for its goals. Managers build teams; leaders build cultures. Put another way, managers lead you along well-traveled paths and make sure you travel them well, while leaders take you off the map."

Another distinction between leaders and managers: The latter typically stay put while the former tend to move. That is, even if it's off the map, a leader has a destination; a manager, on the other hand, has a station. "If you don't know where you're going, you're not leading," Balzac continues. "Similarly, if no one's following you, you're not a leader; a leader without a follower is just someone taking a walk. The job of a leader is to build the organization, build the culture and create a sense of teamwork that gets the organization moving in the right direction."

While a manager's chief responsibility is *doing*, a leader's often is *thinking*, Babjak adds. "Leaders should have a global perspective," she says. "You really need to draw on data — internal and external — and intuition to identify alternative solutions based on situations as they unfold. Leaders know how to do that, but managers sometimes are more focused on creating a specific function or supervising a specific project."

Follow Be the Leader

Most association executives know fundamentally what a leader is and what a leader does. Not all of them, however, know practically how to effectively implement successful leadership, as Grubbe did to help the Appraisal Institute address its identity crisis. Whether you're struggling with staff or board relations, therefore, here are tips for moving from manager to leader in pursuit of CEO excellence:

- **Look ahead:** According to Todd Ordal, president of CEO consultancy Applied Strategy, CEOs must be future-focused. "It's helpful to actually allocate several hours a week to thinking about the future," he says. "That's something leaders do that managers don't. The phone's going to ring, so if you want to be tactical, just show up and answer your phone and your day's off to the races. It's about time management as much as anything else. It's helpful to schedule your time in blocks of strategic versus tactical efforts; use a different color on your calendar and see what the ratio is."
- **Do what's right:** When the Appraisal Institute's predecessor organizations merged, they made decisions that were easy, not right, according to Grubbe. "A leader has to be able to make decisions that are not always popular," he says. "If you use a football analogy, it's like going up and down the field with short passes and stalling inside the 20

— hello, Chicago Bears — which will only get you a field goal. Sometimes you have to be looking at the long term; you have to look at that long pass every once in a while and understand that only by risking it can you score a touchdown.”

- **Build community:** On staffs and boards alike, a leader often is just as useful socially as strategically. “You’ve got to build community,” Balzac says. “How do you do that? You talk to people and get to know them. Successful leaders model a willingness to acknowledge the accomplishments of others, praise people when appropriate — even for things not work related — and demonstrate the ability to give and receive help.”
- **Challenge assumptions:** Like Babjak — who likes to ask, “What if?” — good leaders question the status quo. “As a manager, you have to answer a lot of questions,” Ordal says. “But as a leader, you have to be asking as many questions as you’re answering.”
- **Check your ego:** Leaders aren’t dictators, according to Babjak, who calls her CEO-board relationship a “50/50” partnership. “One of the key enablers for successful CEO leadership is building trust and earning respect,” she says. Grubbe agrees. “The one fatal flaw I see a lot of CEOs make is they make decisions that affect the organization either without informing their board first or without gaining the support of the board,” he says. “This is a team game. There are occasions where it’s appropriate for a CEO to speak up. But you have to pick your moments.”

Finally, don’t trade in *all* your management cards for leadership ones, Babjak cautions. “The best scenario for an association is to have a CEO who is a leader with management skills,” she says. “Management and leadership don’t need to be mutually exclusive. You can be both. And you should be.”



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**HOW TO... CULTIVATE SUCCESSFUL BOARD RELATIONSHIPS**

William St. John, CAE, president and CEO of the Dietary Managers Association, shares five tips for building strong connections to and within a board of directors.

If a board were a busy intersection, the CEO wouldn't be one of the cars in traffic, but rather a traffic cop, using hand signs and signals to tell vehicles — directors and officers — when to slow down or stop, and when it's safe to proceed.

No one knows that better than William St. John, CAE, president and CEO of the Dietary Managers Association in St. Charles, Ill. An association professional for 32 years — at the CEO level for 28 of them — he's seen boards come and go, playing the perpetual game of musical chairs that is association governance. Even as the faces in his boardroom have changed, however, there's always been at least one constant during his 24 years at DMA: him.

"Most of our board members have no experience being on a board, so they're initially kind of uncomfortable in that role," says St. John, whose board has 15 members, including four officers. "So, they look to staff — and to me, in particular — to be their leader."

Because his board members — foodservice professionals with little to no senior-level leadership experience — require a great deal of training and orientation, St. John knows better than most what it takes to build from a scratch a successful, working board of directors. Here, he offers five tips that CEOs can use to forge productive CEO-board relationships:

1. Educate Your Board: The first step is orientation and training. It's the first thing you're going to do with your board and it sets the tone. Size your directors up individually; figure out what skills they do and don't have, then individually tailor your training to each of them. One thing that's worked really well for us is we developed an online boot camp with everything they need to know about serving on a board. They can go online whenever it's convenient and take each little part of the course on their own schedule. It gives them a more comfortable way to learn what they need to know because they're not asking questions in front of their peers or feeling embarrassed, and they can spend more time on those areas that they're not comfortable with, like finance. It's giving them the right tools to do their job.

2. Set Expectations: Step two is clear role delineation — making sure they know what the role of the board is. My board members come on and want to do tasky things. So the first thing I do is take them from tactical to strategic ways of thinking. To help with that transition, we make sure we have a good job description to hand them. Then we define expectations. What do we expect them to bring to the table? Maybe it's background, maybe it's skills, maybe it's that they're a good thinker. We expect them to come to every meeting, do their

homework, read the materials and understand them, and to call if they need help.

3. Prioritize Communication: However you communicate, the secret is to do it often and provide accurate information. Also, try to keep it as simple as possible. Don't give them more information than they need. We've been doing this dash-boarding thing recently where you consolidate all the important information so that anybody can pick it up and know immediately what it says. It's worked well.

Whatever the communication, make sure it's in an appropriate format. We try to identify early on with the whole new board what they're most comfortable with. Would you rather hear from us through e-mail, or by monthly telephone calls, or a blog? Different boards want different things. You need to keep evolving and meet the needs of whatever board is there at the time.

Most important, though, is being a good listener. Most of us want to talk. I think the most important thing, though — especially for staff — is just to be quiet. If you have something brilliant to say at the end, that's great, but let the board come up with the ideas, even if you have to feed them to them before the meeting. Even if you're a staff-driven organization, you don't want to appear like you're railroading things.

4. Build Trust: Fourth is to build trust. You have to be reliable. You've got to prove to them that if they ask you to do something, you're going to do it. You have to be dependable. Make them understand that you're not going off with your own agenda. My first boss in the association world drilled into my head that surprises are unacceptable. For example, don't ever show up at a board meeting and ask them to approve something they're seeing for the first time. Make sure they have the information way ahead of time so that when it's time to vote, they feel prepared. You can say whatever you want, but you've got to build trust through your actions, you've got to do it over time.

5. Make It Personal: I make it a point to meet with every new board member face-to-face and spend individual time talking about more personal things, like the culture of the organization. When they're coming onto the board, they're coming from their local experience in their chapter, out in the middle-of-nowhere Kansas. That's all they know. One of my jobs is helping them make the transition to the national board. It's kind of a mentoring role, in a way. I've found it's really, really important to establish a connection with each of them individually. I'm not talking about going out for beers on a Friday night, but talking one-on-one every once in a while and asking them about their family and kids and finding something you have in common that you can have a conversation about. That's a really important part of board relationships.

William St. John, CAE, is president and CEO of the Dietary Managers Association in St. Charles, Ill. To learn more about DMA, visit www.dmaonline.org.



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INTERVIEW WITH JACK RIVES

Jack Rives, the American Bar Association's new executive director, tells *CEOnly* how he plans to work with his board to change the future of his association and — while he's at it — the entire legal profession.

Like most of the country, the American Bar Association is trying to build a bridge that will take it smoothly from recession to recovery. Because it's experiencing falling membership and insufficient non-dues revenue, however, not to mention an identity crisis that includes questions about its purpose, role and relevance, it's facing an uphill battle. And so is Jack Rives, who joined the association in May as its new executive director.

Luckily, Rives is used to challenges. A former three-star general, he retired as judge advocate general of the U.S. Air Force in March, commencing a new career in association management after more than 30 years in law.

To find out how his military and legal backgrounds will help him renew, revitalize — and maybe even revolutionize — the ABA, *CEOnly* spoke with Rives about his goals for the association, and how he plans to engage his board, staff and members in pursuit of a sea change for the entire legal profession.

***CEOnly:* Although most association CEOs have spent their careers working for nonprofits, you've spent yours working for the federal government. How has your experience in the military — as a lawyer and legal advisor — prepared you to lead the world's largest voluntary professional association?**

Rives: As head of the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps for the U.S. Air Force, I was in charge of a large group of legal professionals. The Air Force JAG Corps has a total of some 4,600 people in about 350 different offices worldwide. A lot of the work I did, especially over the last 10 years, was on the management side — leading the staff and helping people to be successful. There are obvious direct corollaries to the ABA, which has almost 400,000 members and a staff that totals about 950 — most of them in Chicago, along with a large office in Washington D.C. Making sure people understand the vision of the organization, making sure they are working together for common goals, and making sure they can thrive in their jobs — certainly those are common areas between what I did in the past and what I need to do now with the association.

***CEOnly:* What are the greatest challenges you inherited when you joined the ABA?**

Rives: The challenges for the ABA at the time I arrived are basically threefold. One, we need to attract more members. Right now, the ABA has fewer than 30 percent of the total number of American lawyers. We need to work on increasing

that percentage. Second, we need to work on non-dues revenue. I expect significant improvement there in the next few years. Third, especially because of current economic challenges, we have to look at cutting operating expenses. Our fiscal year begins Sept. 1 and our budget for general revenues will be about 10 percent lower in fiscal year 2011 than in fiscal year 2010.

CEOnly: What are some of your plans for addressing those challenges?

Rives: Of course, we need to spend money wisely. The essential keys will be to focus on our members and to prove the value of our association. One of the satisfying things I've found at the ABA is that so many bright people are already working to enhance the value we offer to members. We currently have a lot of good programs and resources, and we're not just sitting by idly. We're making progress on many great new initiatives. For instance, the website we have now isn't bad, but it needs to be improved, and we're working on a number of ways to do that. We've launched a new site, for instance, that's specifically designed for solo practitioners, which account for about 30 percent of American lawyers — although only a small percentage of them are currently ABA members.

Another thing we're doing is evaluating our organizational structure. The ABA is very large. We have some 2,200 entities within the ABA, from divisions and sections to standing committees and special forums and projects. They all have value, but when you have budgetary limits, you must decide wise ways to spend. We're considering ways to combine some of our entities and perhaps sunset some of them.

CEOnly: Obviously, you aren't tackling these problems alone. You're doing it with your board. What's your role on that board?

Rives: We've got great people in our association, both on the volunteer side and staff. We have a lot of volunteers who've been active for a number of decades. The head of ABA is our president; I'm responsible for leading the staff. Our governing bodies are the Board of Governors, with 37 to 40 people, and the House of Delegates, with 561 members. The Board of Governors meets on a fairly regular basis and the House of Delegates meets twice a year. I work especially closely with the Board of Governors to make sure we're sharing the vision about what to do, and we're on the same pages with priorities. Of the staff, I'm the one who deals most regularly with the volunteer leaders. I need to understand their vision of where the association needs to go, then I need to communicate that with staff and make sure staff provides the day-to-day work necessary to accomplish that vision. It's not enough to just nod your head and say you understand; it's critical to follow through. And that's my job. I make sure we execute the vision and the various decisions made by our volunteer leaders.

CEOnly: Has it been difficult working with an established board as a new executive director, and how have you ingratiated yourself with your directors?

Rives: I've found the people of the ABA to have a very collegial spirit. People are glad to have someone in charge that's anxious to understand them and to work with them. I appreciate the value of communicating, and I know how difficult it is to communicate effectively. I enjoy listening and I like to consider fresh ideas and suggestions. I'm careful to try to understand everyone's perspective, and I know how important it is to close loops as decisions are made and implemented. It's important for people to understand that I am not locked in to preconceived ideas, that my mind is open and I am willing to consider any and all suggestions. I've found that by following such a process, people are willing to work with us to try to accomplish our goals. It's been a privilege to get to know the senior leadership of the ABA.

CEOnly: While it's obviously helped you, personally, transition into your new job, can an open mind also help your association transition into its new role?

Rives: Yes. I'm encouraging staff and members to look at things with fresh eyes and to be as creative as they possibly can. I don't reject any ideas out-of-hand. We're taking all the suggestions we receive and we're analyzing whether and

how they can be applied. I believe we're at a critical point for the legal profession and the ABA. This is an historical inflection point: The future is likely to be much different than the past. I'm optimistic that our future will be very bright.

CEOOnly: Ultimately, does the ABA need to change in order to realize that future?

Rives: Many members of our association talk of our current circumstances as a "perfect storm." In that scenario, they begin with the overall economic problems facing our nation and the world; then they look at the legal profession, which is undergoing difficult times; and then they focus on the ABA, which is losing some membership and needs to do a better job of enhancing value for members while increasing non-dues revenue and lowering operating costs. You can expand each of those areas and view the situation as a perfect storm. But with the quality of the people in the ABA, I'm optimistic that we're going to have a bright sunrise in the not too distant future. Yes, many things may be different — some in significant ways — but we have a very bright future ahead of us.

Jack L. Rives is executive director of the Chicago-based American Bar Association. For more information about the ABA, visit www.abanet.org.



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DEALING WITH DESTINATION: THE NEW PARADIGM

Destinations nationwide are struggling to make ends meet. Here's what associations need to know about doing business with cash-strapped CVBs, and what they can learn from cities in order to address their own mission-critical challenges.

By Tom Noonan, President and CEO, Visit Baltimore

To the average traveler, a destination is a place. It's somewhere you go — for work, for fun and sometimes just because. To the association traveler, however, a destination is so much more. First and foremost, for example, a destination is a partner. It's not just bearings; it's business. And for destinations and associations alike, that business is changing.

The Challenge: Government

Take Baltimore, for instance. When we book meetings in Baltimore, we create a real partnership with our association customers. We work together because we believe, wholeheartedly, that what's good for their organization is good for our city. These days, however, association partnerships coast to coast are more like troikas. Along with the destination and the association, there's a third face at the table, and it belongs to city government.

As they are for associations, these are especially challenging times for city governments, which must support a growing number of services for a growing number of people — but with a *shrinking* stream of revenue. Consider the impact of infrastructure, for example. Cities typically get money from the states to finance road construction and repair. Because states get their money from federal transportation dollars, however — of which there are fewer, thanks to the recession — cities are left wanting. Especially in older cities, however, infrastructure can't wait. With or without federal transportation dollars, the work must proceed. So, cities are forced to pay for roadwork and other needs with money from their general fund, which means diverting it from city-supported convention centers, CVBs and other agencies.

Nationwide, destination marketing organizations have lost millions of dollars to infrastructure and other equally important interests, such as education and law enforcement. Although it generates real economic impact, tourism may not always be a top priority for city governments, members of which are sometimes keen to consider borrowing from tourism budgets to fund other, higher-profile concerns.

What this means for associations is that CVBs and convention centers can no longer afford to offer the incentives and discounts to which groups have become accustomed. And that's not likely to change any time soon. Even when the economy recovers, destinations and cities will be slow to realize the benefits.

The demands on their coffers are too great and too many. Everybody is in the same boat, and — in some cases — that boat may be motoring toward new taxes on hotels, restaurants and rental cars that will further test the partnerships between destinations and associations.

The Solution: Governance

In Baltimore, we're having a conversation about our future. If our greatest challenge is government budget shortfalls, we've decided, our greatest solution might be governance.

Indeed, faced with one question — “How do we do more with less?” — we've challenged ourselves to ask several more, including: Is it possible to unite two or three related agencies under a single board? Is there an opportunity for those agencies to share core functions? Can we be stronger, perhaps, if we're smaller?

The way we manage tourism and conventions — our whole governance structure — might change dynamically in the City of Baltimore. One idea under discussion is creating an authority model and potentially bringing three to four local tourism organizations under the same corporate umbrella in order to save money on back-office functions like accounting, IT and human resources while continuing to deliver on our shared goals and mission.

In the meantime, we're asking more of our members, relying more on committees to do the work we need done. As a result, we hope, we'll save money and stimulate the kind of creativity and collaboration that's needed to find new revenue sources.

The Method: Governing

Although the economy has been the No. 1 challenge for cities, destinations and associations, good governance can help organizations solve any number of problems. As CEOs, it's our job to oversee the governing — and to make the business case for change when it's needed.

In Baltimore, my role has been that of adviser. Although I have a board, I also report to the mayor as a member of her cabinet. In an advisory capacity, it's my job to paint a picture for her of how our industry's working and how our city's model can be improved so that it works more effectively.

Whether you report to a mayor or a board of directors, being a successful adviser requires:

- **Cooperation:** When you're talking about governance, it's not uncommon to run head first into a lot of heat and territorial ground. You have to look past that, and get others to look past that. Instead of being territorial, you've got to be willing to get everybody in a room — all your stakeholders — and have a conversation about how to strengthen your organization.
- **Flexibility:** You have to be flexible, and you have to be willing to dramatically change the way your organization does business. As a CEO, you're paid every day to do a job, and that job is doing what's best for your organization. Now is the time to look outside your normal business routine and consider a new paradigm for your organization.
- **Vision:** Change requires you to make the point over and over, and to sell it again and again. The best way to do that — to persuade the skeptics — is with vision. You've got to be able to look down the road and say, “It may be a tough year ahead, filled with growing pains, but imagine how well this new model is going to work once it's finally in place.”

Even in these economic times, the pressure is still on associations and destinations to deliver. Their relationship is changing, no doubt, but the importance of their partnership remains. And if both parties can make some necessary changes in governance — fundamentally altering the way they do business — both will emerge from this recession stronger and more successful

than ever before.

Visit Baltimore is the official sales and marketing organization for Baltimore that generates economic benefits for stakeholders through the attraction of convention, group and leisure visitors. For more information, visit www.baltimore.org.



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FIVE RECESSION-BUSTING RESOURCES

It's said that Rome wasn't built in a day. Well, neither was your board. Because it takes time, patience, education, and effort to build a successful board of directors, here are five resources that you can use to find information, seek inspiration and stimulate innovation on your way to great governance:

1. [National Association of Corporate Directors](#): Although it's got "corporate" in its name, the National Association of Corporate Directors in Washington, D.C., is an invaluable resource for directors who serve on all types of boards, including nonprofit boards. In fact, the NACD network includes nearly 10,000 directors and executives from public, private and nonprofit organizations. Among NACD's most valuable offerings are its Director Professionalism Course, which teaches new directors about director roles, responsibilities and leading governance practices; its in-boardroom programs, which offer customized, confidential in-boardroom evaluation and education for the full board in your boardroom in the context of your industry; and its webinar series, which includes bite-sized online education on topics such as finance, strategic planning and risk management.

2. [The Conference Board Governance Center Blog](#): The Conference Board is among the most trusted sources for business information and analysis. It should come as no surprise, then, that its governance blog is a useful repository for all things "board." Featuring news, intelligence and tips, the blog, according to The Conference Board, "is meant to provide corporate directors with important information and analysis that helps them in the performance of their duties."

3. [ASAE's Acronym Blog](#): As the national "association for associations," ASAE knows a lot about association boards, and its contributors share what they know on Acronym, ASAE's blog. Although governance isn't the blog's theme — ASAE calls Acronym a "veritable alphabet soup of ideas for the association community" — board issues play prominently in its posts, which are chock full of information, inspiration and ideas for association boards. And in case you need more resources: Check out the Acronym blogroll, which features links to more than two dozen association-themed blogs.

4. [Governance as Leadership](#): Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards: Although it was published in 2004 — long before the Great Recession — *Governance as Leadership* by Richard Chait, William Ryan and Barbara Taylor is still a highly engaging, and highly relevant, read. Self-described as a "powerful framework for a new covenant between trustees and executives," the book offers a new model for association board governance that's based on leadership instead of financial management and strategic planning. Called "generative governance," this new model promises to inspire a new approach to governance with your organization.

5. [BoardSource Downloadable E-Toolkits](#): BoardSource, which provides information and consulting for association boards, offers a series of six downloadable e-toolkits for nonprofit boards. Available for 30 days upon purchase as a PDF, each includes an entire suite of tools that association staffs and boards can use to guide decision making on subjects such as finance and leadership. Available toolkits include Surviving the Financial Crisis, Recruiting a Stronger Board, Getting On Board With Effective Orientation, Fundraising Fitness, Assessing and Supporting Your Chief Executive and Fearless Filing: Conquering Form 990's Governance Questions.



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BE YOUR ASSOCIATION'S CHIEF NETWORKING OFFICER

Although it's especially valuable for young professionals, networking is equally essential — indeed, critical — for industry veterans, including CEOs, who should consider these five reasons for making networking their top "to-do."

Thanks to the very nature of their jobs, association CEOs are expert networkers. Because relationships — with employees, members, boards, volunteers and media — are their responsibility, they have to be. In fact, networking is how many association CEOs got to the corner office in the first place. After all, they typically didn't apply for their position on Monster.com; instead, most were recruited for it via their network of professional and personal contacts.

Indeed, most CEOs have built their networks gradually and deliberately over the course of their careers, intent on one final goal: the perfect job at the helm of the perfect organization.

Of course, the thing about networking is: It works. Many association professionals have successfully networked their way to the top of an organization. Once they get there, however, they often find themselves enveloped in a classic case of careful-what-you-wish-for. Because the demands of their job are so many and so great, networking typically falls to the wayside, replaced by the mechanics of 24/7 leadership, strategic planning and board governance. As a result, their web — once strong and fruitful — wilts.

That's a mistake. Because although it's a popular career-building tool for young professionals, networking is equally useful as a business-building tool for seasoned association executives.

Indeed, networking — even at the CEO level — is critically important, as it can help you meet the people you need to know to promote your members, grow your organization and develop your own leadership skills. A valuable strategy for solving problems, gathering intelligence, recruiting members, procuring suppliers and even stimulating word of mouth marketing, networking at its best promises a slew of professional and personal benefits, from fundraising to friendship.

Before you decide you're too busy to do it, therefore, consider these five reasons for not only maintaining your network, but also continuing to build it as your association's Chief Networking Officer:

1. Networking generates learning: Because continuing education opportunities for CEOs are sometimes hard to come by, networking — particularly with fellow CEOs — is an ideal way to fill the C-level learning gap. When they desire high-level education, attending a CEO breakfast or even joining a CEO discussion group on LinkedIn can expose CEOs to case studies,

ideas and insights from fellow executives, whose experiences, examples and advice often prove invaluable when it comes to developing your own knowledge and enhancing your own skills.

2. Networking facilitates problem solving: Few jobs are as lonely as that of CEO. After all, CEOs are responsible every day for making major decisions that impact both the short-term health and long-term future of their organizations. And yet, CEOs have very few places to turn for unbiased advice and ideas. Especially in times of crisis, networking can therefore offer not only value, but also sanctuary. Indeed, whether their organization is facing financial hardships, board struggles or staff conflicts, CEOs who are confronting problems often use networking to find inspiring solutions from people who know exactly what they're going through. Sitting on a board with a fellow association CEO, for example, may offer access to a sympathetic sounding board, while mingling with CEOs in other industries at events might reveal uncommon cures for common challenges. Why spend time and money researching problems, the logic goes, when you can pick up the phone and find immediate solutions?

3. Networking helps organizations grow: Despite the ubiquity of technology, successful CEOs know that human capital is far more critical to growth than software. In pursuit of partnerships and profits, they use networking strategically to not only meet people, but also to find opportunities. In addition to fellow CEOs, for instance, they position themselves to build relationships with community leaders, politicians, accountants and attorneys — people who know other people — which can later bear fruit in the form of vital mergers and acquisitions, money-saving supplier agreements, collaborative programming and even valuable talent acquisition, as vigorous CEO networkers often meet people that later become their organization's most trusted employees, its most active volunteers or its most supportive donors.

4. Networking is free advertising: Although their most important job is visioning and strategic planning, CEOs also own the important task of serving as their organization's principal spokesperson, advocate and ambassador. Networking, even if it's only the virtual kind — social networking — is therefore critically important to CEO job performance. Indeed, thanks to their position and clout, when CEOs talk, people listen. That means association chiefs are in a unique position to acquire members, promote events and otherwise build their organization's brand.

5. Networking is your chance to give back: Because they're so busy, CEOs are understandably selective — and maybe even a little bit selfish, some are likely to admit — about how they spend their time. Unless the ROI is big, bold and immediate, therefore, they're likely to decline nine out of every 10 networking invitations that land on their desk. When they do, they're unfortunately letting the chaos of the present cloud their memory of the past. “Unfortunately” because CEOs play a vital role in succession planning not only for their individual organizations, but also for the entire association industry. Indeed, many CEOs ascended to their current position under the tutelage of an older, wiser association mentor, and the next generation of association professionals will similarly benefit from the selfless guidance of a CEO adviser.

Whether you do it to benefit yourself, your organization or the larger association profession, the fact remains: Networking is part of every association CEO's job. Doing it well helped you reach the top — and continuing to do it well will ensure that you stay there.



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LESSONS FROM... CAPITOL HILL

Smart association leaders learn from their peers. This month's lesson comes from Capital Hill. It's food for thought; chew, swallow, then digest.

Following the lead of President Woodrow Wilson — who famously said, “I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow” — smart association leaders borrow lessons learned not only from other associations, but also from leaders in other fields, sectors and industries. This month's lesson comes from a great American president. It's food for thought; chew, swallow, then digest.

“Be a listener only, keep within yourself and endeavor to establish with yourself the habit of silence, especially in politics.”

— Thomas Jefferson



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WELCOME TO THE CLUB

Association Forum of Chicagoland welcomes its newest CEO and C-level members.

The Association Forum of Chicagoland would like to recognize its new C-level members. Please welcome the following individuals to the Association Forum — and to the exclusive CEOnly and C-level community:

- Joanne Rock, Executive Vice President, Printing Industry of Illinois/Indiana Association
- Dixie L. Arthur, President, ASAE Business Services, Inc.



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SAVE THE DATES!

You're busy. Really busy. Even when you have no time, however, some things are worth making time for. Like high-level education, networking and socializing. While opportunities abound for your employees, chances for CEOs to learn, meet and collaborate with fellow executives are few and far between.

To provide you with C-level development opportunities, the Association Forum of Chicagoland is hosting several exclusive, CEOnly events in the coming months including the CEO Association Leadership Summit and CEO Retreat that will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 21 and Wednesday, Sept. 22.

These CEOnly programs are sponsored by [Visit Baltimore](#).

Register Now: Association Leadership Summit and CEO Retreat

This is a special two-day CEO regional leadership event that will be held together with Northern Illinois University's Association Resources Center and the ISAE Institute for Executive Education. This two-day program will help executives learn to strengthen their governance team and take their organization to the next level. Attendees will be asked to complete several assessments and/or surveys in advance of the program to help presenters deliver a personalized experience that provides immediate benefit back to attendees' associations.

Day 1: Dynamic Duos: Leaders Partnering for Association Excellence

CEOs and elected board officer will receive strategies to help build a board that demonstrates visionary leadership. Complete an assessment to help you sustain effective relationships. Organizational leadership executives, Jo Ann Brusa, PhD, a licensed psychologist and president of the Brusa Group, and Ronald S. Moen, MS, president and CEO of The Moen Group LLC, will lead this event.

Day 2: CEOnly Retreat: What Keeps You Up At Night?

Hear real world experiences from world-class leaders, participate in facilitated discussions and build your network of colleagues. Join candid conversations with Thomas C. Dolan, PhD, FACHE, CAE, president and chief executive officer of the American College of Healthcare Executives. Facilitated discussions will be led by Philip Lesser, Ph.D., CAE, vice president of Bostrom Corporation and Ross Ament, CAE, association relations specialist with the Association Resource Center.

Date: Tuesday, Sept. 21 and Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2010

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

***Day 1 Only Fee** (price includes cost for both CEO and elected leader): \$659 (member); \$799 (non-members)

***Day 2 Only Fee** (price for CEO only; dinner for Day 1 is included): \$359 (members); \$499 (non-members)

***Fee for Both Days:** \$859 (members); \$999 (non-members)

Where: Northern Illinois University Naperville Conference Center, 1120 E. Diehl Road, Naperville, IL

**(Pricing includes meals on each day. CEOs who attend Day 2 may attend the evening dinner on Day 1 at no additional cost. CEO members of either Association Forum or the Illinois Society of Association Executives will qualify for the member rates.)*

Register Now: Trade Association CEO Shared Interest Group Idea Swap

Date: Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2010

Time: 8:30 - 10:00 am

Fee: Complimentary

Where: Association Forum of Chicagoland

Register Now: CEO Only – A Forum for Large Association CEOs

Date: Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2010

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m., education and networking

Fee: Complimentary

Where: TBD

About: This event is for association CEO's whose organizations have a budget of \$10M or more OR have more than 50 staff. This event will provide networking, learning and sharing opportunities among large association CEOs facing complex issues in a rapidly changing environment.

Register Now – CEOs with Budgets Under \$2 Million Shared Interest Group: Cloud Computing and the Virtual Office

Date: Thursday, Nov. 4, 2010

Time: TBD

Fee: Complimentary

Where: TBD

RSVP Now: CEO Reception Before Holiday Showcase

Date: Monday, Dec. 13, 2010

Time: 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Fee: Complimentary

Where: Hyatt Regency Chicago (Room Location TBD)

About: Join the Association Forum CEO and President, Christie A. Tarantino, CAE, the Association Forum Board of Directors and other **CEOs from associations in the Chicagoland area for networking and cocktails.**

Register Now: Holiday Showcase

Date: Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2010

Time: 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Fee: \$99

Where: Hyatt Regency Chicago

About: This event is the No. 1 business services and meeting sites exposition in the Midwest. As a registered attendee, you will have access to all morning education, lunch, and to the tradeshow floor. We will kick off the morning with education sessions that will help you connect with other CEOs and gain insight into the issues they are facing.

Save the Date: CEOs with Budgets Under \$2M Shared Interest Group: Winning Over Rogue Members and Volunteers

Date: Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2011

Time: TBD

Fee: Complimentary

Where: TBD

Save the Date: CEOs with Budgets Under \$2M Shared Interest Group: Topic TBD

Date: Tuesday, March 1, 2011

Time: TBD

Fee: Complimentary

Where: TBD

Save the Date: Association Leadership Summit for CEOs and Chief Elected Officers

Date: March 15, 2011

Time: 8:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Where: TBD - Chicago Loop

About: Association Forum has partnered with key executives to present several opportunities for CEOs and their Chief Elected Officer to spend a full day together to enhance team building, increase communications and collectively move the association in the right direction. This program is offered twice a year for the two top leaders of the association to build their partnership.

The Association Leadership Summit is exclusively for CEOs and their Chief Elected Officer and you must be present as a team to benefit from the day.

All of the exercises and scenarios are based on a team effort! Through these interactions, you will be energized and equipped with the keys to help you achieve desired goals among the board and staff — all while having fun. You will complete an assessment to help you gear up as a team to lead the association in the right direction. More details on the assessment will be available upon registration. CEOs who are a member of Association Forum or ISAE qualify for the member rate.

Participants will:

- Join other CEOs and their Board Chairs to gain new insights about your leadership and how to best partner as a team.
- Hear from expert facilitators who will guide you through your journey together and provide you with resources to use immediately.
- Receive the tools to partner effectively as a team and lead the association.

About the Presenters

Jo Ann Brusa, PhD, is a licensed psychologist and president of the Brusa Group, a consulting firm specializing in organizational, executive and senior leadership team development. Her background includes more than 29 years with associations, boards, higher education and for profit organizations.

Ronald S. Moen, MS, is president and CEO of The Moen Group LLC, a consulting firm based in St. Louis. For more than 30 years he has served as the CEO of both large and small associations and for profit companies. He also has helped develop international associations as a staff and board member.

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CEOPINION



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

To your fellow CEOs, your two cents is priceless. Toss it into the CEOnly well to join the C-level conversation. Just point and [click](#), then take your peers' pulse on this issue's theme: leadership.

What Do You Feel is the Most Important Leadership Characteristic Needed to Advance Your Association?

- A. Character
- B. Communication
- C. Drive
- D. Knowledge
- E. Vision

For the Summer *CEOnly's* poll question "What's Your Association's Biggest Post-Recession Priority?" the top answer was "launching new programs".