

FORUM

2021 | V105•N2

INFORMING & INSPIRING
TODAY'S ASSOCIATION
PROFESSIONALS

THE NEW LEADERSHIP MODEL

Events over the past year have created the need for an approach focused on authenticity and empathy

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An aerial photograph of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, taken during the "golden hour" of sunset. The city's dense urban core is visible, featuring numerous high-rise buildings and skyscrapers. The city is situated along the coast of the Burrard Inlet, with a large marina filled with sailboats in the foreground. In the background, the rugged, forested mountains of the Pacific Ranges are silhouetted against the warm, orange and yellow sky. The overall scene captures the city's unique blend of urban development and natural beauty.

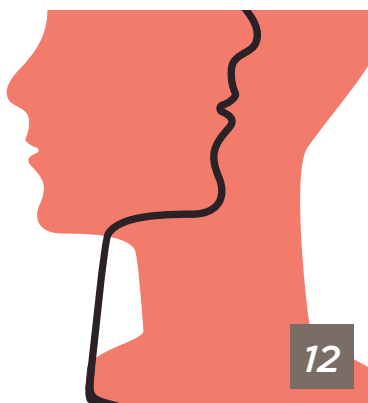
VANCOUVER

We should warn you - Vancouver changes people.

Their perspectives, their trajectories. There's something about this raw natural beauty, mixed with urban entrepreneurial activity that isn't just attention grabbing. It's unignorable. It invites people in, opens their eyes and expands their minds. And when it's time to go, your delegates may find that even though they're leaving this place, this place will probably never leave them.

We can't wait to meet you again.

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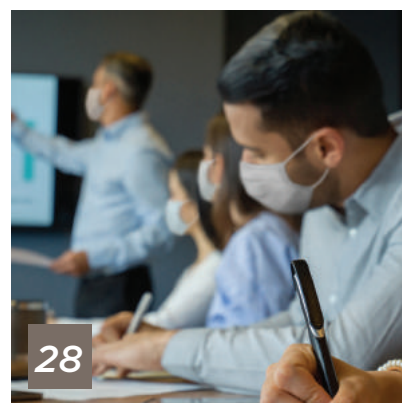
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Editorial Contributions. You are invited to share your expertise and perspective. Article ideas and manuscripts should, whenever possible, reflect real and specific experiences. Before writing, please contact Association Forum at 312.924.7024 for the **FORUM** Editorial Requirements & Guidelines, or obtain them at associationforum.org. **FORUM** reserves the right to edit all articles.

CONTENT WORKING GROUP **FORUM** MAGAZINE TASK FORCE, 2020-21

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MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH THESE UPCOMING PROGRAMS

EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM DRIVEN BY ASSOCIATION **FORUM**

A six-month education program geared for association professionals under the age of 35

Registration will open in June.

EXECUTIVE **LEADERS** DRIVEN BY PROGRAM **af**

A six-month education and networking program for leaders who are looking to advance in the association industry.

Registration will open in June.

af **ORTY** **UNDER 40**

A prestigious recognition program for forty accomplished association or nonprofit professionals who are under the age of 40.

Applications will be available in June.

Managing Through Unprecedented Change

This past year has been different to say the least. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every facet of our lives, from personal to professional. While we grapple with isolation, grief and anxiety, we are still expected to carry on and do our jobs. Association Forum is here to help you with your professional challenges — whether they're directly related to the pandemic or not.

For all of us at the American Society of Anesthesiologists, this has been a particularly challenging time, especially as our members needed to support patient care on the front lines while staff had to manage the transition to a virtual work environment. We continue to work diligently with some reduction in revenue from the loss of our in-person meetings. What we have learned during this crisis has been tremendously invigorating for us.

We have learned that we can work effectively as a team to provide state-of-the-art virtual meetings and needed resources in real time as well as effectively manage our budgetary challenges. The pandemic has shown us that the professionals in the association community have tremendous skills and resilience and have proven to be indispensable during this time of crisis.

Under former chair Geoffrey Brown's leadership, Association Forum was able to offer resources and virtual education to members to keep this community strong. Along with Forum's CEO and President Michelle Mason and the 2020-2021 Board of Directors, Brown oversaw the creation of a new business plan for the organization. Working with the consultancy firm THRUUE, the team determined what made Association Forum special and what could be changed in order to run more like a business.

This new model refocuses our value proposition to three key areas: convening, content and consulting. We already know that Forum is great at gathering members and partners for thoughtful events. We also have an award-winning magazine and a huge body of knowledge online. Consulting closes the loop and follows up on delivering the information to members while also learning about how they've applied it.

Other key elements to our business plan are our four verticals. These are areas where we'll focus our efforts and hone our strategy.

Welcoming Environment®

This program has been a cornerstone for the organization — displaying thought leadership and social impact. We strive to create a sense of belonging and connectedness that engages individuals in an authentic manner. Welcoming Environment is already successful in convening (our national summit) and content (our first-of-its-kind research study). We plan to expand these efforts with the addition of advisory groups, a certificate program, a C-suite training and more. We are looking to hire a diversity consultant to help us strengthen this program and ensure we have the infrastructure needed for it to succeed.

Leadership Development

Association Forum is a resource at every stage of your career. I remember my first Forum meeting when I first arrived in Chicago

as a mid-career executive in 2002. Forum provided me with a network and the resources to develop new skills, particularly around leadership, change management and team building, as well as creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. I'm certainly in a different role today, but I still rely on my peers at Association Forum for support and resources. While this area of our business is well established, we plan to operationalize the leadership journey by developing a road map. We want to provide clear pathways to members who are interested in expanding their knowledge and advancing in their careers.



PAUL POMERANTZ, CAE,
FASAE

CEO, AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
ANESTHESIOLOGISTS AND
CHAIR, ASSOCIATION FORUM
2021-2022

Collaboratives

One of our most successful programs is the Healthcare Collaborative. We convene leaders for intellectual discussion, debate and community building. Expanding on that success, we're looking to offer this thought-provoking model in other areas, including digital-first, the future of meetings, operations and more. We look forward to exploring this new frontier and serving our members in a new way.

Foundation

The Association Forum Foundation was established in 1987 and has done plenty of good. From hosting our annual Honors Gala to providing meals to healthcare workers during the height of the pandemic, the foundation has been a vehicle to give back. But the foundation has never had a clear business case. We plan to change that and leverage our foundation as an incubator for new programs and products that engage members. Through pulse surveys and direct member input, we'll be able to explore new opportunities based on our members' voices. We look forward to this change and the opportunities for product development, research and education.

This shift toward new priorities has forced us to forego some of our existing programs and products. As members, I encourage you to be patient with us and know that these changes will bring even more value to your membership.

These plans are exciting, but the real work begins now. Thank you to the incredible board and staff at Association Forum — your efforts have kept us relevant through these incredible times. It's been a tough year, but, armed with this new business plan and a 105-year history, we're prepared for what's to come.

As part of our efforts to provide a Welcoming Environment® for our members, we are providing a copy of our Core Values translated into **Italian** by Interpro Translation Solutions, Inc.

Be a Welcoming Environment

We are a welcoming environment that actively seeks to enhance the larger community by recognizing the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We will make everyone who interacts with us feel welcomed, represented, engaged, inspired and empowered.

Embrace Innovation and Quality

We love to try new ideas and seek inspiration from inside and outside the association community—we value improvements big and small. Experimenting with breakthroughs is encouraged and celebrated; however, we know when to pull the plug. We aim to continuously improve.

Have Fun and Stay Positive

It's a fact that you generally spend more time with your co-workers than you do with your own family. We strive to make our work environment one that is fun, positive and an overall great place to work.

Open and Honest Communication and Teamwork

You don't know what you don't know! Effective communication is key. We shall cultivate an environment where we speak openly, honestly and with the goal of building a better team. Candor is constructively embraced. We will work collaboratively to deliver value to members.

Accountability—Own It

We hold each other accountable and expect people to respectfully ask questions and raise concerns. Because work requires interdependent teams and collaboration, we will trust and depend on each other to be responsive and to deliver value and quality services to stakeholders.

Win with Integrity

We operate ethically, contributing our time, talents and know-how to advance our communities where we work and live. We commit to growing our association in ways that benefit the environment and society.

Nell'ambito del nostro impegno a fornire un Welcoming Environment® per i nostri membri, forniamo una copia dei nostri valori fondamentali tradotta in italiano da Interpro Translation Solutions, Inc.

Essere un Welcoming Environment

Siamo un ambiente accogliente che cerca attivamente di valorizzare la comunità più ampia riconoscendo che il tutto è maggiore della somma delle parti. Faremo sentire benvenuti, rappresentati, coinvolti, ispirati e responsabilizzati tutti quelli che interagiscono con noi.

Adottare innovazione e qualità

Ci piace provare nuove idee e cercare ispirazione all'interno e all'esterno della comunità dell'associazione: apprezziamo i miglioramenti grandi e piccoli. Incoraggiamo ed encomiamo la sperimentazione di innovazioni; tuttavia, sappiamo quando è il momento di la spina. Miriamo a migliorare continuamente.

Divertirsi e rimanere positivi

È un dato di fatto che in genere si trascorre più tempo con i colleghi che non con la propria famiglia. Ci sforziamo di rendere il nostro ambiente di lavoro divertente, positivo e in generale, un ottimo posto di lavoro.

Comunicazione aperta e onesta e lavoro di squadra

Se non lo sai, non lo sai! Una comunicazione efficace è fondamentale. Coltiveremo un ambiente in cui parliamo apertamente, onestamente e con l'obiettivo di costruire una squadra migliore. La trasparenza viene accolta in modo costruttivo. Collaboreremo per portare valore ai membri.

Responsabilità: il nostro must

Ci riteniamo responsabili e ci aspettiamo che le persone pongano domande e sollevino preoccupazioni in modo rispettoso. Poiché il lavoro richiede team interdipendenti e collaborazione, ci fidiamo e dipendiamo l'uno dall'altro per essere reattivi e offrire servizi di valore e di qualità agli stakeholder.

Vincere con rettitudine

Operiamo eticamente, contribuendo con il nostro tempo, i nostri talenti e il nostro know-how per far progredire le comunità in cui lavoriamo e viviamo. Ci impegniamo a far crescere la nostra associazione in modo da favorire l'ambiente e la società.

The Retargeting Basics

WHILE RETARGETING HAS BEEN AROUND FOR SOME TIME, MOST ASSOCIATIONS STILL AREN'T USING THIS TYPE OF ADVERTISING. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SERVICE.

We've all been there: You're looking at a pair of shoes or workout equipment or doing any other sort of doom-shopping to stave off the pandemic's doldrums — and suddenly those potential purchases start following you around the internet. That's the result of retargeting. Here's how it works, including why retargeting might not be right for your association.

What is it?

Retargeting is a type of advertising that targets people who have visited your website or social media profiles. Shopping for shoes is a good way to visualize the experience.

Say a potential customer goes to a shoe store's website and browses around without buying anything. As they surf the internet, the shoe company's products will follow the user around, offering a chance to the potential customer to go back to the store's site and buy the shoe or other similar shoes. These ads can be scheduled to start appearing any time, whether later that day or a month down the line. Unlike other types of advertising, you don't need to collect the person's email address or need them to search for a related product. Once they visit your website, you can instantly start sending that person ads in the hopes of luring them back to the site.

How does it work?

Retargeting is often done through the use of cookies, which are small file that store information on a person's computer. Once a user engages with your site, this bit of stored information will then follow the user around.

Associations can partner with providers to execute these initiatives. Facebook and

Google are two major companies that offer retargeting services, but other smaller providers exist as well.

What are the goals?

Retargeting generally has two primary goals: awareness and conversion. As a first step, retargeting can inform potential customers about the products your association offers. For these retargeting ads, you can educate people about continuing education, events, credentials and more. By seeing your brand's likeness multiple times, it can help build familiarity and trust, which can increase the chance of someone buying one of your products.

For people who are already familiar with your brand and its offerings, retargeting is an opportunity to get them to commit to a purchase.

For instance, if you have a new virtual event, you can create an ad to target and entice existing customers with information about the virtual event as they browse other sites.

What are the challenges?

Retargeting is a long-term strategy that should be used in conjunction with other marketing initiatives. While it can be beneficial, especially for larger associations, it does require time and effort: Successful retargeting campaigns will likely need to be tested, monitored and tweaked over the course of several months. Additionally, campaigns can take several months before yielding results. Lastly, not all internet users like ads following them around the internet — implementing retargeting campaigns could damage the reputation or goodwill of your brand.



31% OF ASSOCIATIONS ARE USING RETARGETING

Source: Marketing General Incorporated's 2020 Membership Marketing Benchmarking Report

New Board Members and Officers

Association Forum is pleased to announce three additions to the board of directors for 2021-2022, as well as the selection of a new officer, which were unanimously approved by the FY21 board of directors. The new terms began on April 1, 2021.



Chair (automatically succeeds from Chair-Elect)



Paul Pomerantz,
CAE, FASAE,
CEO, American Society
of Anesthesiologists

Chair-Elect (automatically succeeds from Secretary-Treasurer)



Denise Froemming,
CAE, CPA, MBA, CEO/
Executive Vice President,
Institute of Real Estate
Management

Secretary-Treasurer



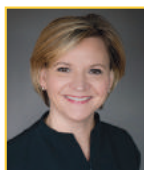
(one-year term)
Gregory Heidrich,
CEO, Society of
Actuaries

Immediate Past Chair



Geoffrey Brown,
CAE, CEO, National
Association of Personal
Financial Advisors

New Board Directors (three-year term)



Vicki Loise, CMP,
CAE, CEO, Society
for Laboratory
Automation and
Screening



Jose Segarra, MNA,
CAE, Executive
Director, Bostrom

New Supplier Partner Member



Director
(three-year term)
Mark Vaughan, FASAE,
Executive Vice President
and Chief Sales Officer,
Atlanta Convention and
Visitors Bureau

Ex-Officio Member



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FASAE, CAE,
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Association Forum

Legal Counsel



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Matt Sanderson,
President & CEO,
SmithBucklin



Melvin Tennant, II,
MA, CAE, President
& CEO, Meet
Minneapolis



Pauli Undesser,
MWS, CAE,
Executive Director,
Water Quality
Association

Collecting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Data Under GDPR



Q: OUR ASSOCIATION IS INTERESTED IN COLLECTING DATA TO FURTHER OUR EFFORTS ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION [DEI]. HOWEVER, ONE OF OUR EUROPEAN MEMBERS HAS SAID THAT WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DO THAT BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION [GDPR]. IS THAT TRUE? DOES BREXIT CHANGE ANYTHING FOR OUR BRITISH MEMBERS?

A: The GDPR, which was adopted by the European Union (EU) on May 25, 2018, regulates the collection, use, storage and maintenance of “personal data” belonging to EU residents. As defined by the GDPR,

“personal data” includes, for example, individuals’ names, email addresses, photographs, bank details, social media posts, medical information and Internet Protocol (IP) addresses. By its terms, the GDPR

regulates entities located both within and outside the EU, including those in the United States, that obtain personal data of EU residents in connection with goods and services provided to them. Goods and services include those for which payment is made (e.g., membership; conference registration), as well as those freely available on an association's website (e.g., online communities).

GDPR regulates the processing of all personal data, but it applies stricter rules to "special categories of personal data," which include data concerning race and ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data identifying an individual, health data and data concerning one's sex life or sexual orientation. Special category data is considered particularly sensitive because of its potential to be used for unlawful purposes, such as discrimination or curtailment of individual freedoms. As a result, GDPR prohibits its processing altogether unless certain exceptions apply.

Those same "special categories of personal data" are exactly what associations are increasingly interested in collecting and using for DEI initiatives. Associations may process such information only if they comply with the terms of one of the exceptions set forth in the regulation. For example, associations can obtain explicit consent from the individual subjects of the data request. For the consent to meet GDPR requirements, the association must advise the individuals of the purpose and length of time for which it is requesting the data and make clear that they may elect not to respond. As a practical matter, an association may meet the explicit consent requirements by: (i) highlighting the relevant question(s) (e.g., by using pop-up or similar online technology that allows the data subjects to review individual requests for information and either "accept" or "decline" the opportunity to respond); (ii) stating the purpose for which the information will be used (e.g., to improve annual meeting programming; to increase diversity among board and/or committee membership); and (iii) advising the data subjects that responses are voluntary and they may withdraw their consent at any time.

When an association wishes to obtain special category data only for the organization's internal purposes, it may process the data under a separate "not-for-profit" exception. Specifically, the data processing must relate only to association members, former members or persons in regular contact with the association in connection with its purposes

and must be carried out "in the course of [the association's] legitimate activities with appropriate safeguards" in place. The data processed cannot be disclosed outside the association without the consent of the data subjects. This exception arguably is less cumbersome for an association to meet than obtaining explicit consent; however, the allowable use of any resultant data is more restricted. In addition, such processing lacks the transparency associated with obtaining explicit consent. As a result, associations processing special category data to further DEI efforts may decide that it is more prudent to seek explicit consent.

Regardless of the exception relied upon, associations processing special category data should document plans for retaining the data for only as long as it is used and in no event longer than the period for which it obtained data subjects' consent. In addition, associations should seek guidance from appropriate technical personnel as to how such data may be isolated and deleted (or de-identified) within the established time frame.

While the United Kingdom officially left the EU last year, GDPR-type requirements continue to protect the personal information of U.K. residents. The U.K. adopted its own Data Protection Act in 2018 (DPA 2018), which was amended as of Jan. 1, 2021, to reflect the U.K.'s status outside the EU. DPA 2018 includes the U.K. GDPR, which, as the title suggests, broadly adopts the principles of the EU GDPR. Accordingly, the rules for processing personal data belonging to U.K. residents are substantially similar to those for EU residents.

There are many positives associated with collecting demographic data to further DEI efforts within associations and the industries and professions that they represent. So, too, are there benefits to protecting members' (and others') most sensitive information from use for discriminatory purposes. The real challenge for associations is to understand what data they can collect, and the manner in which they may collect it, so as to protect individual rights while furthering their broader societal goals. With careful planning, along with legal and technical support, associations can do both.

THIS LAW REVIEW WAS WRITTEN BY SUSAN FEINGOLD CARLSON AND EDITED BY JED MANDEL, BOTH OF WHOM ARE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF CHICAGO LAW PARTNERS, LLC. CLP SERVES AS THE ASSOCIATION FORUM'S GENERAL COUNSEL.



**SUSAN FEINGOLD
CARLSON, J.D.**

CHICAGO LAW
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is one thing...

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GETTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN PLACE CAN HELP OVERCOME ANY HURDLE, WHETHER IT'S A MATTER OF GOVERNANCE PURVIEW OR STAYING ATOP TECH TRENDS. STRONG LEADERSHIP IS THE WAY.

“I believe being authentic is learning to honestly accept who I am, both assets and liabilities, and showing that to the public. Leadership is not about being an emotional robot, but also not overly reacting to a situation either.”

— The New Leadership Model, pg. 12

“To be seen as experts in healthcare foodservice and food safety elevates our members and our certificate holders, which underlies why we pursued certain data initiatives.”

— A Balanced Data Diet, pg. 20

“Unconscious bias training is an entry point that will help staff and members begin to better understand themselves and how their bias impacts their relationships with others.”

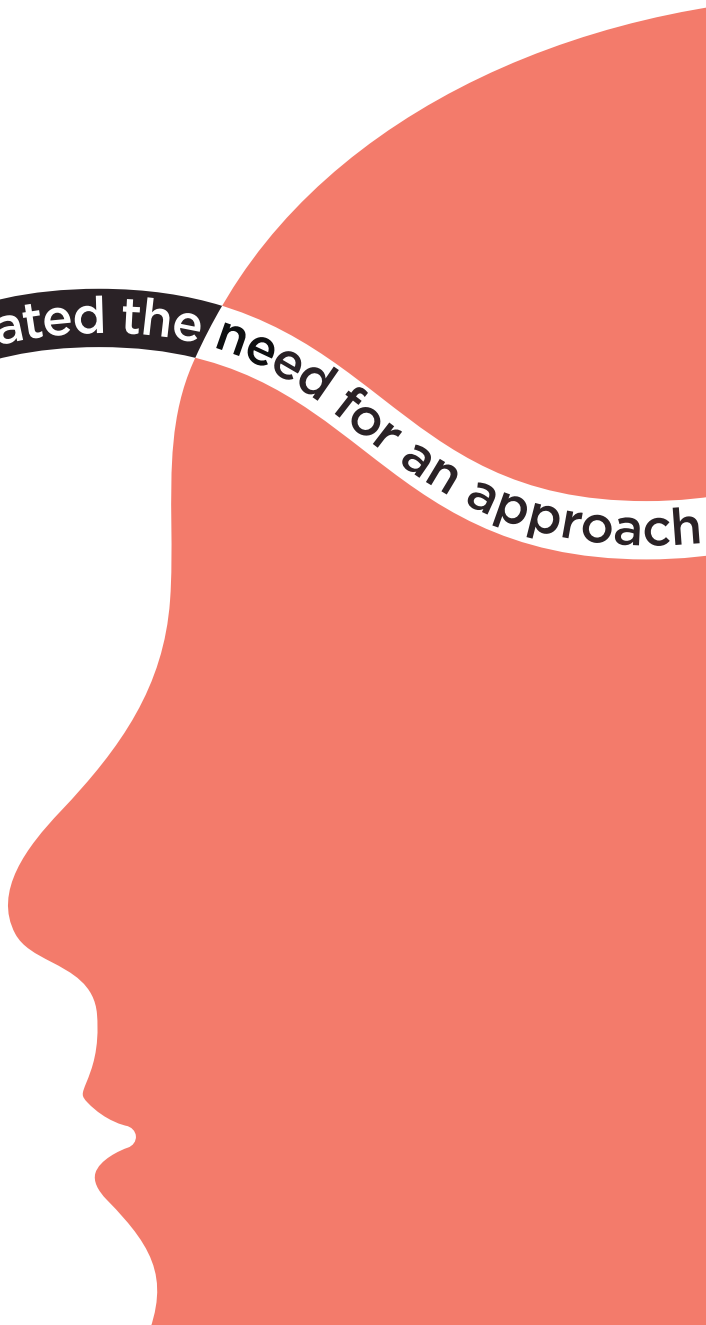
— Undoing Bias, pg. 24

A NEW WAY TO LEAD



THE NEW LEADERSHIP MODEL

Events over the past year have created the need for an approach





by Teresa Brinati

The last year has been filled with struggle and resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement and the Jan. 6 insurrection on the U.S. Capitol are barometer-bursting crises on their own. But together, they have contributed to a complex web of social, political and civic unrest. Their ramifications are both global and local, affecting us personally and professionally. Can associations help us navigate the change needed and guide us toward a more restorative culture?

Authentic and empathetic leadership are models that could pave the way. On the surface, they may appear to resemble personal traits rather than leadership concepts — along the lines of the folksy adage, “don’t judge someone until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes.” But even the *Harvard Business Review* (*HBR*) has devoted considerable ink to authenticity and empathy in leadership, identifying them among three core drivers of trust.

“People tend to trust you when they think they are interacting with the real you (authenticity), when they have faith in your judgment and competence (logic), and when they believe that you care about them (empathy),” argued Harvard Business School Professor Frances X. Frei and entrepreneur Anne Morriss in their article “Begin with Trust” in *HBR*’s May/June 2020 issue.

“Trust is the basis for almost everything we do,” Frei and Morriss wrote. “It’s the foundation on which our laws and contracts are built. It’s the reason we’re willing to exchange our hard-earned paychecks for goods and services, to pledge our lives to another person in marriage and to cast a ballot for someone who will represent our interests. It’s also the input that makes it possible for leaders to create the conditions for employees to fully realize their own capacity and power.”

Authenticity Within Associations

To a varying extent, association leaders are practicing authenticity and empathy in the workplace, spurred by a pandemic-induced remote work environment and a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). But just what that authenticity and empathy look like depends on the association — and the leader.

“There is always a struggle as a leader to being ‘more’ than I am,” says Marvin Lindsey, CEO of the Community Behavioral Healthcare Association of Illinois (CBHA). “I believe being authentic is learning to honestly accept who I am, both assets and liabilities, and showing that to the public. Leadership is not about being an emotional robot, but also not overly reacting to a situation either.”

To that end, Lindsey is a proponent of rethinking beliefs and challenging assumptions — just because you’ve always done things one way doesn’t mean you have to continue to. “I try to practice these principles in my interactions with my members and staff on a day-to-day basis,” Lindsey says.

Vulnerability is another characteristic of authenticity, says Jose Segarra, an account executive at Bostrom, an association management services company. He is drawn to the thinking of social scientist, professor, author and podcast host, Brené Brown, who said: “Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we’re supposed to be and embracing who we are.”

“Vulnerability is uncomfortable, but it is the only way we can be authentic,” Segarra says. “We are vulnerable when we show others who we are.” As a leader, he has shared with his staff professional vulnerabilities, including how he likes things done when planning a big project. He’s also shared personal vulnerabilities, such as telling his staff when he went through a breakup.

“It doesn’t mean you have to share absolutely everything. And, of course, don’t share anything inappropriate,” Segarra adds.

The benefit is that by sharing parts of who you are, staff understand where you are coming from and what you are going through. And there is mutuality in this approach. “I encourage them to do the same. To come to work knowing that they can be authentic and that we won’t judge them for being authentic,” Segarra says.

Authenticity takes courage. Mary Lynn Fayoumi, president and CEO of HR Source, believes there is no one-size-fits-all approach for authentic leaders and that they can be successful with completely different leadership approaches. “I practice authentic leadership by sharing my successes and failures with my board and team,” she says. “I don’t pretend to

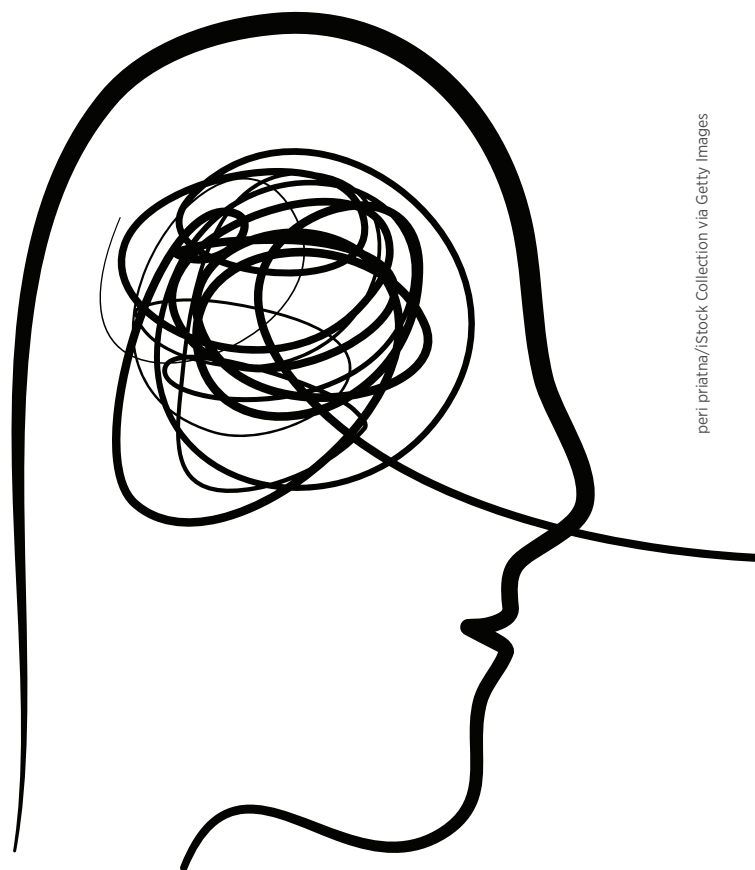
know all of the answers, I highlight mistakes that I make personally or have been involved with, and I encourage others not to be afraid to try new things and fail. During the pandemic, we have experimented with many new member benefits. Not all of them have been met with success, which has provided learning opportunities for our team and improved service to our members.”

Segarra agrees with that assessment — particularly around providing leeway for failure — again citing Brown: “No vulnerability, no creativity. No tolerance for failure, no innovation. It is that simple. If you’re not willing to fail, you can’t innovate. If you’re not willing to build a vulnerable culture, you can’t create.”

Demonstrate Empathy

Authenticity and empathy are breaking through the noise and contributing to DEI efforts. In a *Wall Street Journal Magazine* interview this year, plus-size model Ashley Graham noted the traits essential to her success are “being myself, being authentic and being kind.” She relied on these traits to ascend the heights as a supermodel and businesswoman in the fashion industry, which is notorious for marginalizing fuller-bodied and curvier people like her.

Last year, Kamala Harris became the first woman, first Black person and first South Asian American to be elected vice president of the United States. When she gave her acceptance speech, there were large



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video displays buffeting the stage with the message, “The People Have Chosen Empathy.” For the occasion, Harris intentionally wore head-to-toe white, a color choice that has deep significance in politics. Dating back to the suffrage movement, women have worn white as a symbolic way of resisting gender inequality. During her speech, she was in empathetic solidarity with, as Harris stated, “the generations of women — Black women, Asian, white, Latina, Native American women — who, throughout our nation’s history, have paved the way for this moment tonight. Women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality and liberty and justice for all.”

Each of us can build a capacity to empathize and contribute to creating an environment of trust in which all feel safe bringing their whole self to work. Empathy is a core tenet of DEI that should be integrated into the values of an association, its culture, its activities and how it conducts business.

Even the Bard of Avon weighed in on empathy nearly 400 years ago. In the new book, *Of Human Kindness: What Shakespeare Teaches Us About Empathy*, Drexel University Professor Paula Marantz Cohen propounds that *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello* and *King Lear* are plays that “elicit empathy for people whose backgrounds, situations and bodies are different from our own — characters we might even dismiss, dislike or even abhor.” She adds that these lessons from literature are particularly relevant today.


“The anger and unwillingness of many Americans to listen to those with different opinions is a serious

societal problem,” Cohen said in a *Wall Street Journal* interview earlier this year. “It is easy to react thoughtlessly to people who seem alien; it is much harder to see things from their point of view, to recognize what influences, in which we may be complicit, have formed or deformed their characters. . . . When we address one another with empathy, disagreements don’t go away, but compromise and unity are easier to reach.”

So how do you develop empathy and make it part of your association’s culture? Empathy takes regular practice, along with self-awareness and an openness to accept feedback, including critique, Fayoumi says. “Leading by example means thinking about the behaviors you want to model in your organization and letting others look behind the curtain at your authentic self, not just on special occasions, like a holiday party, but on a regular basis,” she says. “Trust is built over time through many different experiences and has to be earned. People watch and learn from leaders, so leaders need to be mindful of what they’re teaching.”

Lindsey says empathy begins with developing the ability to take a self-inventory of all member and staff relationships. “I think it is up to me as a leader in our association to create an environment where people feel safe. I do this by first showing interest in their lives, next by being honest when I am communicating to them, by keeping them informed about anything that impacts them and also respecting when we have confidential discussions. That also includes that I do not discuss anything about one of their coworkers with them,” Lindsey says.

Gaining different perspectives is an important part of the empathetic leadership equation. “We exhibit empathy when we try to understand another’s perspective or situation,” Segarra says. “Typically, that has a lot to do with emotions. We have to, at times, shift our focus from the goals of the organization, or whatever project we are going through, in order to ensure that our most valuable resources — our staff — are taken care of in a holistic way. Only when staff see leaders of organizations practicing empathy, authenticity and vulnerability will they know it’s OK for them to do that as well. Most importantly, pay attention to the instances when those same things are happening and acknowledge or celebrate them! Let them and others know that it is OK.”



Authenticity and empathy are essential ingredients in keeping association workplaces equitable, inclusive and functioning effectively.

What’s Worked During the Pandemic

For more than a year, the COVID-19 pandemic has tested association leaders’ mettle. This includes the

abrupt pivot to remote work, as well as relying on technology for the delivery of member products and services.

Could leadership be replaced by technology? Maybe, according to software company Citrix's recent report, "Work 2035: How People and Technology Will Pioneer New Ways of Working," which is based on the responses of 500 executives and 1,000 employees at large and mid-sized companies in the United States and Europe. One-third of interviewed employees said leadership will be "partially or completely replaced by technology" by 2035. Although only a small percentage of executives agree with that, there's a shared belief that automation will have some impact.

The report notes that the pandemic has given association executives "a crash course in some essential characteristics of leadership in that

emerging environment: more tech savvy, more focused on speed, more adaptive, more concerned with innovation and the collaborative processes that stoke it." The pandemic has also given a crash course on compassion, requiring leaders to support employees and members who've experienced displacement, according to the report.

HR Source's staff of 40 has been working almost entirely remotely during this time, with their headquarters in west suburban Chicago remaining empty. "My word of the year is grace, and my intention is to give grace," Fayoumi says. "There's no wall between the workplace and home anymore, so there's no question that employers are going to be faced with many more nuanced and reasonable requests to work remotely, to live elsewhere, to work alternative schedules — to figure out how to continue to maintain their employment while also living their lives."

WHAT IS AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP?

The idea of authentic leadership has picked up steam in the last decade or so. Harvard professor and businessman Bill George has written extensively on the concept and is helping form its theoretical roots. Most scholars and business thought leaders agree that authentic leadership includes four qualities:

Relational transparency: the leader openly shares their own thoughts and beliefs, while minimizing any inappropriate emotions

Self-awareness: an ongoing process of reflection by the leader of their own strengths, weaknesses and values



Internalized moral perspective: the leader adheres to a positive ethical foundation that allows them to be resistant to outside pressures

Balanced processing: the leader solicits opposing viewpoints for fair consideration

Organizations will have to think about what they need, where people can get work done and how employees can be most productive. “There are many advantages to being flexible that are tied to business outcomes,” Fayoumi says. In the past, she says, companies may have thought that this flexibility was strictly a benefit for employees. “But there’s a growing understanding that the benefits are on both sides — that it can benefit the employer, too.”

CBHA has a staff of five that has always worked remotely. Even so, Lindsey says that new challenges have emerged. “The pandemic has affected my staff in different ways, whether having children being schooled at home, concern about elderly parents, being constantly isolated or less active. A part of my job has been to reach out individually to all my staff to check in once a week about non-work-related issues. I have been intentionally more optimistic and focused on actions we can take now to improve our situation post-COVID-19.”

Segarra agrees and says that it is important to reinforce a sense of belonging and purpose while understanding that working from home may be a chaotic experience for some and isolating for others. “As leaders, we should maintain frequent communication and engagement with staff to ensure they remain mentally prepared to face the work challenges present and to come.”

Personal connections contribute to productivity and organizational effectiveness. In the absence of in-person meetings, watercooler talk and coffee breaks, an extra effort should continue to be made to connect with staff and board leaders.

Segarra says that he has done several fun and inexpensive or free exercises with his board. For example, several “icebreaker” websites facilitate small groups of people who spend a short amount of time answering questions to get to know each other better. Bostrom also has hosted virtual game nights, happy hours and lunches, as well as extended virtual meetings, to accommodate informal conversation and friendly chats.

An online trivia game and a virtual cooking event were well-received for CBHA, according to Lindsey. Plus, monthly virtual meetings of CBHA’s board, staff and committee chairs have had increased attendance compared to in-person meetings — an unexpected upside that has made meetings more inclusive.




“You can never, never make a mistake when you err on the side of generosity. And you can’t make a mistake if you give someone grace. To see those happening in the workplace, now more than ever, is a beautiful thing.”

— MARY LYNN FAYOUMI, PRESIDENT AND CEO, HR SOURCE

Keep It Real

During the pandemic, Lindsey has often thought of his late mother, who was a treasure trove of wisdom. One of her sayings that has helped carry him through is: “You can’t keep reheating old soup; it ain’t gonna taste right.” To him, authenticity and empathy are essential ingredients in keeping association workplaces equitable, inclusive and functioning effectively.

Fayoumi’s aunt, who is a member of the Franciscans, a Catholic religious order, is fond of quoting St. Francis of Assisi: “Preach the gospel always, and if necessary, use words.” Basically, don’t tell people who you are, show them. “That’s why I think empathy is just such a perfect example,” Fayoumi says. “You can never, never make a mistake when you err on the side of generosity. And you can’t make a mistake if you give someone grace. To see those happening in the workplace, now more than ever, is a beautiful thing.” 

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A BALANCED DATA DIET

The Association of Nutrition and Foodservice Professionals has built a robust research program that benefits members and the association alike.

By Matt Schur





Data is at the forefront of everything we do today — an idea the Association of Nutrition and Foodservice Professionals (ANFP) understands at the very core of its mission. Within the past decade, the organization ramped up from having scant research initiatives to producing nearly a dozen major reports every year.

One of the goals — then and now — was to be viewed as authoritative in the industry. “To be seen as experts in healthcare foodservice and food safety elevates our members and our certificate holders, which underlies why we pursued certain data initiatives,” says LeAnn Barlow, MBA, vice president, strategic initiatives and analytics, ANFP.

Getting to this point has been a methodical journey and a priority for President and CEO Joyce Gilbert, PhD, RDN, during her tenure of leading the association. “Ultimately what we’ve been trying to do — and have been successful in doing — is raising the value proposition of our members,” Dr. Gilbert says. “Because if our members are the ones in the field with the best practices, then they’re the most employable and knowledgeable. And then they can better care for their patients and clients.”

That value proposition has been the end game for ANFP. But in doing so, ANFP has realized numerous other benefits, including helping the board make more informed decisions about the association’s overall direction.

Now in the eighth year of its data program, ANFP’s research arm is flourishing — and only expanding.

A New Vision

ANFP is composed of three entities: ANFP, which acts as the parent entity and is a 501(c)(6); a certifying board, which is also a 501(c)(6); and the Nutrition and Foodservice Education Foundation (NFEF), which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. (Barlow is also the executive director of NFEF.) ANFP has more than 15,000 members, with a goal of providing the best nutritional care through foodservice management. Roughly 80% of members are in some form of healthcare, whether that’s long-term care, acute care, nursing homes or assisted living.

Prior to joining ANFP, Dr. Gilbert was the executive director of the Marilyn Magaram Center, a non-profit foundation at California State

University-Northridge, which focused on research and education in food and nutrition. Equipped with this background when she joined ANFP, Dr. Gilbert felt that the best way to serve the larger food and nutrition industry was through data — first in gathering and analyzing findings, then in converting that information into best practices.

“I brought this vision with me eight years ago,” Dr. Gilbert says. “I really believed in looking at a way to expand the data that was available in the industry. The way we wanted to approach it was to create a data repository by utilizing a large database and then integrate that into our members’ operations. At the same time, I wanted to couple that with digital transformation, which was really about reinventing our members’ value proposition based on the capabilities of the digital technologies that were centered on our numbers.”

Data wasn’t a priority before Dr. Gilbert joined, with ANFP making decisions based largely on history, she says. “Because we have three entities, we have three boards. In order for the boards to make informed decisions, I wanted to make sure they knew what was going on in the industry,” Dr. Gilbert says. “In order to do that, we had to collect data from our own members. I think you make the best-informed decisions when they’re based on data, especially data that has been analyzed by a third party.”

Placing a larger emphasis on data also helped solidify ANFP’s brand. When Dr. Gilbert joined in 2013, the association had just rebranded to ANFP from being the Dietary Managers Association. According to Dr. Gilbert, when the organization rebranded, it lost some identity in the industry. “We really needed a way to get our brand back out into the industry,” Dr. Gilbert says. “Since we no longer had the Dietary Managers Association name, I thought another way to put our foot forward would be to develop something that was valuable to the industry as a whole. And then we can brand through that, and that’s what we’ve done over the last eight years.”

The Distribution Network

ANFP now runs several data-gathering programs, including a skilled nursing benchmarking report, an acute care benchmarking report, a research database that combines ANFP data with national data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and, more recently, a quarterly COVID-19 survey. ANFP often partners with

>15,000

ANFP MEMBERS

ANFP has more than 15,000 members, with a goal of providing the best nutritional care through foodservice management. Roughly **80% of members are in some form of healthcare**, whether that's long-term care, acute care, nursing homes or assisted living.

a third party to conduct and analyze surveys, which adds a layer of credibility and accuracy to the findings. "Our thought process is: In order for us to better care for the patients and our clients, we need to have the most accurate data in the industry," Dr. Gilbert says. "We can convert that data to best practices, and then share those best practices across the healthcare arena, especially in food management and food safety."

To distribute these findings, ANFP built a robust content marketing program. One of the cornerstones is ANFPtv, a dedicated resource portal that hosts videos and articles, which often highlight research findings. An emphasis is placed on microlearning, particularly videos that are one or two minutes long. "I have to give credit to our director of education, Cindy Zemko," Dr. Gilbert says. "She really looked at how adults learn. Because of the analytics we collected on our own website, we can see how long they stay engaged. Nine times out of 10, they were buying shorter-information products."

All this can get quite meta quite quickly: The data about data helped ANFP decide what to do with data. In short: ANFP prioritized a larger quantity of shorter videos while still generating the occasional hour-long webinar or more detailed continuing education that's needed to maintain certification. "Sometimes they want the full picture, and sometimes it's just: Hey, it's Wednesday, my boss is asking for this for tomorrow," Dr. Gilbert says. "We want ANFP to be a resource for that, as well."

Members have gobbled it up. Take the topic of labor, which is a constant and major challenge in the

foodservice industry, especially within healthcare. ANFP was able to get 1,300 people to participate in its long-term care facility benchmarking report by submitting data about their own jobs. The very act of their participation has been validating. "When you see people registering to input data for research, that's when you really get the sense they want to get meaningful and actionable data back out," Barlow says.

Through this research program, ANFP was able to ask questions around how certain facilities are recruiting workers, keeping workers employed, what regional issues they face and more. "What our members can do is compare themselves with others working a similar job in the region," Dr. Gilbert says. It allows members to see if they have the right resources, the right number of full-time staff, the correct food budget, etc. "If you do have the right resources, then great. If not, a member can take that data to their supervisor and say, 'Hey, I'm in the lowest percentile in the nation.' That kind of data helps them to be able to make a strong argument for a change in their facility so they can better serve their clients' health."

Data Is King

To sort through what the association should cover in these research efforts, the ANFP team paid close attention to what members were talking about online. "I think when you really see your online communities and what people are talking about, what people want to know, the kinds of questions that come in daily to our member services team — that's where you

want to begin,” Barlow says. “You want to start with the data that people are truly wondering about, interested in and can’t seem to get anywhere else.”

When ANFP looked at those conversations, similar questions kept cropping up: What’s the cost of food? How often do you conduct a specific type of training? How long does it take to hire for a specific position? “Because we see those questions all the time, we went ahead and created the skilled nursing facility benchmarking program so people that participate have free access to that data,” Barlow says.

But ANFP was also sure to include non-members in its overall data-minded approach. ANFP not only works to include non-members in the research, but also offers up many of its findings for free to non-members, as long as they register with an email address. Expanding the program beyond members was important to help strengthen the accuracy and breadth of its data. Plus, what’s good for the industry is also good for ANFP, Dr. Gilbert says.

It’s in this vein that ANFP partnered with the CMS database. Dr. Gilbert recognized that while they had good data about members and non-members who had signed up for past research, the CMS database would provide an even greater magnitude of information to work with and share.

Ultimately, ANFP used the CMS database, which pulls information from more than 15,000 facilities, added ANFP’s own data and created a public-facing interactive dashboard to provide an overview of what’s happening in the industry. “We look at it from a perspective of how it can better the industry, either through best practices or through just getting that information out,” Dr. Gilbert says.

Stronger Together

Building out this platform allowed ANFP to demonstrate its value right away in the pandemic. The infrastructure was in place to immediately start getting data that could help members — in turn building trust and again driving the value proposition of ANFP’s members within the industry. Like most of us, ANFP members had near-infinite questions as the pandemic unfolded last year. What was happening with food safety and labor? What did the supply chain look like? “We wanted to see what kinds of things are being affected by the pandemic,” Barlow says. “We were able to compare and contrast what was happening in the industry and give a heads up of how they can better help and serve the end user.”

Overall, the feeling within ANFP is that this data program has increased the association’s engagement with the industry. In addition to releasing its own data,

ANFP has partnered with multiple other foodservice organizations so they can share services, data and programs. “That’s why we have so many things on our ANFPtv platform that are public-facing,” Dr. Gilbert says. “You know I’d love you to be a member of ANFP. But if you’re not, I want you to be the best person you can be in the foodservice industry.”

Taking this open stance toward data has been helpful in opening doors to partnerships with vendors and exhibitors. And, in general, it draws a wider net of people to ANFP’s website for various reasons: to input data, gain skills for microlearning or build partnerships. “I’ve always felt that, as associations, we’re stronger when we partner with one another,” Dr. Gilbert says. “And this was a very good conduit for us to be able to partner with multiple like organizations across different service areas.”


It’s also helped build sponsorship relationships. ANFP has let sponsors use some of its benchmarking data, which the sponsor can present to its customers. “We’ve had authors take our benchmarking data to create webinars or training materials,” Barlow says. “They’ll feature our data, which helps us grow our program. It also gives the sponsors good data to work with their customers.”

The benefits extend within the realm of ANFP, too. “To me, in order for people to feel that they want to work here, they have to feel that they are a piece of a bigger picture,” Dr. Gilbert says. “And I felt like these programs helped employees see what that bigger picture is. We’re all here because of our members, but we’re also here because of what our members represent in the industry.”

As it plans for the future, ANFP is looking to integrate the existing benchmarking programs with other larger databases to provide even more robust data. They’re also exploring the creation of an analytics platform to make it easier to comb through data.

For other associations looking to replicate ANFP’s efforts, Barlow recognizes that this program didn’t happen overnight. “I think that’s a big lesson learned: to not overwhelm people with everything all at once,” Barlow says. “Pick an initiative that seems like it will resonate with your members and do that.” **E**

MATT SCHUR IS A CHICAGO-BASED WRITER AND EDITOR.

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UNDOING BIAS

The correct approach to unconscious bias training can improve your organization's DEI efforts.

by Brooke Morris-Chott, MPS



In the wake of protests and civil unrest due to recurring violence and systemic racism toward Black Americans, many organizations have taken measures to cultivate a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for employees, members and customers. Unconscious bias training is typically part of these measures, and a growing number of companies and organizations are utilizing this training to ensure that they provide a welcoming, safe and inclusive setting for all.

While many people acknowledge the value of unconscious bias training, some opponents feel it won't put an end to prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. Those who oppose unconscious bias training cite that there is no evidence that this type of training works or that it reduces prejudice within the workplace. In England, for instance, civil servants are no longer required to take part in unconscious bias training, as ministers believe it is ineffective. Still, there are many who support this training and see it as a way to combat a toxic, abusive and bigoted office environment. With the right approach and training, your organization can benefit from unconscious bias training.

Bias Awareness

Unconscious bias, also called implicit bias, refers to biases an individual is unaware they hold. According to the article "Unconscious Bias: When Good Intentions Aren't Enough," written by Sarah E. Fiarman for Educational Leadership, this can include stereotypes that are automatic, seemingly associative, unintentional, deeply ingrained, universal and able to influence behavior. Unconscious bias training uses tools to adjust automatic patterns of thinking in order to eliminate discriminatory behaviors. A critical component of implicit bias training is creating awareness for unconscious bias.

The Southeast Wisconsin chapter of YWCA offers a six-week program called Unlearning Racism: Tools for Action®. During this series, attendees learn about the impact, history and manifestations of whiteness and racism and how they can address racism within their own sphere of influence. According to the program, eliminating racism is an ongoing process that

involves a willingness to learn about — and begin the process of undoing — the adverse impact of racism on individuals, organizations and communities.

“Unconscious bias training is an entry point that will help staff and members begin to better understand themselves and how their bias impacts their relationships with others,” says Rhonda Hill, facilitator of *Unlearning Racism: Tools for Action*. “This conversation is also a soft entry into conversations about microaggressions and racism.” Providing a forum to discuss microaggressions is intrinsic to the success of unconscious bias training, as it confronts these subtle, everyday interactions or behaviors that communicate some form of prejudice toward historically marginalized groups. Microaggressions are often unintentional and aren’t overt forms of racism, which is why including how to challenge microaggressions is important to unconscious bias training.

Some challengers of unconscious bias training argue that organizations are too quick to hop on this type of training as a way to check diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) boxes and, therefore, fail to properly construct the training. To combat this, organizations must implement unconscious bias training across the organization, building a framework that would allow for continued evaluation and growth of staff and members. Prior to the training,

Using unconscious bias training as the first step to a larger plan can be a powerful tool to begin making a real difference in the workplace as it begins to create awareness and opportunity to develop new skills.

organizations should consider setting clear goals and metrics for the training, the quality of the training materials and overall experience, and if and how learnings are reinforced post-training.

“A company that starts the practice of uncovering bias but doesn’t have a framework in place that would allow for further work of inclusion would be doing a disservice to the organization,” Hill says. “Hence, the drawback to unconscious bias training is not having any follow-up or attachment to a larger plan for diversity, equity and inclusion.” Hill

says that using unconscious bias training as the first step to a larger plan can be a powerful tool to begin making a real difference in the workplace as it begins to create awareness and opportunity to develop new skills. It can also present the opportunity for team building and a way to bolster morale within the workplace.



RHONDA HILL

FACILITATOR,
UNLEARNING
RACISM: TOOLS
FOR ACTION

Steps to Combat Bias

A key element to conducting an effective unconscious bias training is confronting bias that exists within the culture of a company or organization. In her 2019 article for *Forbes*, “Your Unconscious Bias Trainings Keep Failing Because You’re Not Addressing Systemic Bias,” Janice Gassam Asare writes, “Unconscious bias training may not account for systemic and structural issues that allow biases to be perpetuated in the workplace. These are the unfair policies, the differences in opportunities and inequitable treatment that allow bias to persist.” While it is just as important for individuals to be aware of their own blind spots and how they impact behaviors and decision-making, unconscious bias training and DEI workshops need to address the systemic and structural issues that allow bias to manifest at a greater level.

Some opponents of implicit bias training suggest that because we all hold prejudices, organizations may be unable to produce a meaningful program with deliverables that reach all participants. Examining internal biases helps make training participants aware of the fact that everyone has certain prejudices. “It can be hard to change behavior if you’re not sure what exactly it is that you’re trying to change,” Hill says. “So, awareness, while it is a beginning, is an important step to move toward shifting the workplace culture.” Taking an honest look at the biases each of us has may be uncomfortable, but it is a necessary step to create a Welcoming Environment®.

Ensuring the mental and emotional well-being of your organization’s staff, members, customers and vendors is essential

to establishing a productive, positive workplace. However, this cannot be fully achieved without confronting racism and bias toward marginalized groups within society and the organization. If conducted properly, unconscious bias training can be beneficial to boosting morale, creating an atmosphere of true transparency and maintaining a healthy and safe work environment at your organization. **F**

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Leading Through Change

THE PANDEMIC REVEALED HOW IMPORTANT COMMITTEE AND BOARD LEADERSHIP IS TO NAVIGATING CHANGE.

BY ANDREW CONNER



Strong leadership requires fast and effective responses in the face of change — whether that's navigating the pandemic and the fight for racial equity or any of the other myriad challenges that arise for associations.

Given the tumultuous 2020, many associations looked at and redefined their approach to governance strategies and structures. In general, the associations that were more flexible, particularly with the board and committees that are leading the association's direction, could better adapt to all these new changes.

Even as the pandemic appears to wane, the need to create an effective governance structure will persist. In particular, many associations are grappling with the following three areas: pursuing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, reexamining the committee structure and purview, and tackling issues

associated with the rise of virtual and free content. Strong governance can lead the way.

The Right Team

Looking at board and committee structure and overall skill competencies has been on associations' radar for years. DEI has especially become more important in light of last year's events — and an area where committees can play a pivotal role in navigating change.

"I think all of the trends have been accelerated by the pandemic," says Erin Volland, MPA, CAE, senior consultant at Association Management Center. "Associations were already starting to look at ways to increase diversity. For example, if you have popular elections, is that the best way to get more members

involved? Some organizations are already changing that and looking at leadership or development committee appointments instead.”

For associations that want to expand membership in a more diverse, inclusive environment, aligning those goals with the competencies of board and committee staff and the overall organization strategy is necessary.

“Where does your association want to go in the next five years?” asks Volland. “Do you want to make significant changes in how you do business or in the stakeholders that are being served? If you do, do you have the right competencies on the board and in your committees to move that forward?”

One way to address this is to look at the committee selection process. Sometimes that process can be overly political and therefore less strategic. Volland suggests identifying the goals of your organization, then looking for people who fit the skills you need to achieve those goals rather than picking the person and fitting them into the position. She points to often-overlooked younger members as an example: “Are you looking at the early career members?” she asks. “These are people who maybe haven’t done their 20 years of service in the association, but they might have a skill or competency that isn’t showing up in your leadership and could prove to be an asset.”

Whether it is looking at younger members of the organization, or diversity in race, gender or ethnicity, or even diversity in things like how members practice their profession or rural members vs. urban members, associations need to analyze unique needs and then determine which skills and competencies they value in members. From there, identify gaps in the board and committees with regard to these needed skills and competencies, and find candidates to fill those gaps. This is where DEI and association strategy should connect.

“Diversity — not just diversity in demographics — is a goal of almost all of the associations I work with,” says Volland. “Associations are looking at their future and asking: Do our programs align with where our members are going? Do we have people that understand what the practice setting is going to look like and what the members are going to need to succeed in 10 to 15 years?”

Defining diversity for an organization in this way will pay dividends down the road.

“I can’t think of an association we’re working with that doesn’t see the value of continuing to move faster in that direction, but they’re also doing the work to define what that means for their profession,” says Volland. “What are the diverse pieces of their

profession or membership that might look different from other associations?”

Moving Quickly

When examining the flexibility of an association, it helps to start at the top.

“I think a lot of what we’re seeing is organizations looking at how authority is distributed: What can the board do? If they have a house of delegates, what can they do? What can a committee actually do with the charges and delegation the board has given them?” Volland says. “We’ve seen quite a few associations take a hard look at that.”

Volland explains that associations with more traditional governance structures were in a tougher position. “Some associations have struggled because the authority given in their organizing documents is given to their largest body — maybe a house of delegates,” she says. “And that can hamstring the board or other committees that are trying to move quickly and respond.”

In her work with her clients, Volland has also had discussions with associations about getting buy-in from the board on more flexible and adaptable procedures — so committees are given more space to operate effectively on their own. She notes that organizations that had already taken these steps prior to the pandemic were better positioned to respond to it.

“Not all associations that we deal with had to go through this process,” Volland says. “And in associations where the board already has authority to make decisions — or could delegate it to committees and task forces — they didn’t really struggle. If they had to cancel their annual meeting, it was a board decision, and that makes it significantly easier.”

By contrast, associations that require more complicated approval, such as from a house of delegates, struggled with making quick decisions in light of the pandemic. Volland expects that this experience will push many associations that may have more traditional structures to adopt more flexible procedures.

“I definitely think associations that have had a direct experience, especially canceling an in-person meeting, are taking a hard look at their bylaws and structure,”

“Do you want to make significant changes in how you do business or in the stakeholders that are being served? If you do, do you have the right competencies on the board and in your committees to move that forward?”

— ERIN VOLLAND, MPA, CAE, ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT CENTER

Volland says. “I think they’re also going to look at things like competencies of people on their board or their committees. So, going beyond the authority and ‘Can we do it?’ to ‘Do we have the right people to do it, and do we have the right structure?’”

Many associations learned this lesson prior to the pandemic. “One trend I’ve seen is toward using more work groups and task forces, which gets committees out of the bylaws,” says Volland. “Flexible associations realized that just because the bylaws say you can have a committee, if they have nothing to do, it’s not helpful. So I’ve seen more associations move to the usage of task forces.”

Using work groups or task forces instead of committees also helps associations take advantage of microvolunteerism, or the idea that the less you ask of volunteers, the better. “[Irrespective of the pandemic,] trends are moving toward shorter, more targeted experiences,” Volland says. “Depending on where people are in their life and their work, a less-demanding task force position may be a better fit for some people than a full year on the board or on a committee. If they’re interested, it’s better to get that person involved in some capacity now because you don’t want to lose that.”

How to Leverage Engagement

One major association trend that has come out of the pandemic is the increase of virtual meetings and events. While in-person conferences will eventually return, many may return with a virtual component, which is probably a good thing. Removing the barriers of meeting in a physical space allows you to attract

a wider audience. Many associations that had in-person events that used to draw a couple hundred people were drawing thousands online. However, does that mean those people are more engaged in committees and with the association at large?

For associations that may be thinking about permanent changes that lean

toward more open, free and virtual offerings, Volland recommends leaders carefully consider the effectiveness. Your education committee, education task forces, annual meeting committees and board should all be taking a hard look at conversion, Volland says. “Are we getting people into leadership because we’ve expanded our offerings?” she asks. “Are we increasing interest? Are we getting new members? Are people who may have dropped membership coming back? I think now [that the pandemic is waning,] associations will have time to take a breath and start looking at what they’ve done over the pandemic and ask, ‘Did this help us?’”

Volland believes that if, after analyzing the data from the past year, associations see increased engagement, they will make many of these changes permanent. “If they’re seeing more members join or apply to be on committees or task forces, I think associations will be much more willing to keep some of the practices they have been offering during the pandemic, such as offering content to members and non-members.”

However, Volland hasn’t yet seen a solid connection between this type of member engagement — free content or increased access to events through virtual attendance — and an increased interest in being involved in the association. “I had one organization I worked with that created a lot of content around the pandemic because they were in healthcare,” Volland says. “They offered that content to both members and non-members, which I think was pretty common during the pandemic — it didn’t matter if you were a paying member or not, we care about the profession first. This association definitely did see an increase in engagement. But I think it is yet to be seen if it will benefit associations from a leadership perspective.”

Overall, the pandemic acted as a catalyst for change for just about every organization in the country, and associations were no different. For associations that have made large changes to how they operate, analyzing the success of those changes is paramount.

When making these analyses, board and committee members should look to the pandemic as an opportunity to improve the association and adopt the strategies that worked and rethink those that didn’t. Coming out of the pandemic, associations that apply these lessons learned will be well-suited to meet any new challenges that emerge. ■

ANDREW CONNER IS A CHICAGO-BASED WRITER AND EDITOR.

Strong governance from committees can help associations tackle novel issues — whether it’s the rise of virtual events or navigating DEI initiatives.



SPRING INTO EDUCATION

With warmer temps comes more education from Association Forum: We have virtual, hybrid and live events scheduled for the remainder of the year.

Check out all our events at
associationforum.org.

We hope to see you soon!





Emerging Leaders 2021

For association professionals under 35, the Emerging Leaders Program provides a six-month course that's full of tips and techniques to help grow their careers. The program helps strengthen communication and leadership skills, provides learning from industry executives, offers one-on-one mentoring, develops professional relationships with peer leaders and gives the chance to attend two Association Forum virtual events: Forum Forward and Holiday Showcase.

We asked this year's Emerging Leaders the following questions:

1. What influenced your decision to become an Emerging Leader?
2. How do you plan to apply what you learn in this program to your career?
3. Who has inspired you in your career?
4. What drew you to the association industry?
5. Any advice for other young professionals?
6. How have your goals evolved this year due to the pandemic? What new skills have you learned in response to the pandemic?

Alicia Belcaster, Marketing Program Manager, Emergency Nurses Association

Influence? This sounded like the perfect fit for professional development that I was looking for as I look to grow my career in associations. A couple of friends and colleagues of mine also highly recommended this program.

Industry draw? In all honesty, I really hadn't planned on working in an association. An opportunity presented itself to me at just the right time, so I took a leap of faith. It was the best decision I've ever made in my career. Not only do I love what I do, but I love the association atmosphere and the "do-good, feel-good" work that comes with it.

Advice? Never stop growing! Career paths are a constant journey, and my best advice for young professionals is to keep learning and driving in the right direction to where you want to be. Your journey begins as soon as you get your first job and never stops until you want it to. There will be bumps along the way, but never give up because the harder you work, the bigger the rewards.

Evolution of goals? New skills? The word of the year for me is one from *[Friends]* I'm sure most people know: "Pivot!" And while it makes me laugh to think of this scene from the show, it really could not be more accurate for how I've managed the pandemic this year. I've had to embrace change more than I ever have and pivot what I had previously planned for the year as fast as possible to get new resources to our members in need on the front lines. It really proved to me that teamwork makes the dream work and together, we can make a big difference.

Brie Bingham, Membership & Marketing Manager, Cremation Association of North America

Influence? I was encouraged to explore the program by my boss, and it appealed to my love of learning.

Industry draw? A job offer! It was a learning curve from 501(c)(3)s, but the people make it great.

McAllister Cox, Manager of Professional Standards, Chicago Association of REALTORS

Influence? I wanted to explore opportunities and hear from successful third parties on how I can advance my career.

Apply learnings? I have realized that building relationships with others outside of your association is critical to career advancement.

Inspiration? I have been inspired the most by our volunteer members. They provide me with the feedback and motivation to want to be the best at my job every day.

Advice? The association world is very big, so find others who you can collaborate with and learn from outside of your association.

Evolution of goals? New skills? I have become very self-sufficient during the pandemic and developed greater confidence in myself to get the job done.

Nancy Elizondo, Accounting Analyst, Chicago Association of REALTORS (CAR)

Influence? CAR's CEO Michelle Mills Clement encouraged me to be part of the program.

Apply learnings? I want to continue to grow professionally, so I will look into more programs similar to the Emerging Leaders Program. I will continue to work on networking and coming out of my shell more.

Inspiration? My cousin Ale — she's had her share of struggles, but her struggles have never gotten the best of her. She continues to grow professionally and is still working toward her goal of obtaining her own business. Through her ups and downs, she never seems to lose vision of her goals.

Industry draw? It just happened. I was working for a small board that merged with a larger association. I was supposed to stay for only one year. But after the year, I was offered a full-time position.

Advice? Advance in your career by investing time on your professional development. Expand your network in every and any career opportunity you get.

Evolution of goals? New skills? My organizational skills — the ability to continue to meet my professional deadlines even though I am now dealing with personal/home tasks all at the same time while working from home.

Kara Ferguson, MSHTM, CMP, Meeting Planner, American Society of Anesthesiologists

Influence? As I continue to focus on developing individually and collectively to enhance my skills personally and professionally, I wanted to participate in a program that was tailored to professionals within the association industry, which is a unique environment.

Apply learnings? I plan to apply what I learned in this program to my career by tracking my progress and taking every opportunity to put what I have learned into practice. My hope is the ideas, thoughts and concepts that I learn from the program will help my team and me to solve specific challenges we may face and add even more value to our association.

Industry draw? Professors at my alma mater, Roosevelt University, drew me to the association industry. During my time in graduate school, many faculty members provided students with information about the meetings industry specifically as it relates to the association world. As I read more about it, I learned that associations are the backbone of many professions. Most importantly, they have a huge impact on working toward a greater good.

Advice? There are a variety of career paths to take, and it may not be easy to reach. However, being your authentic self, taking risks and holding yourself accountable can open doors to many opportunities. Remember to consistently educate yourself, constantly network with others and continuously embrace change.

Evolution of goals? New skills?

Due to the pandemic, I have become immersed in everything digital, particularly the logistics of planning virtual conferences and meetings. It has been a challenge but rewarding at the same time. The pandemic has expanded my knowledge of technology and understanding of what is required for organizers in the virtual world. These times have changed our business operations forever.

Ginny Graves, Senior Product Owner, Association Analytics

Influence? I learned about the program at the Women's Executive Forum and thought it would be a good opportunity to connect with other association leaders in Chicago.

Inspiration? I've had the opportunity to work with and for leaders who have thought of success through the lens of not just personal success, but team and societal success. Working with individuals who are constantly asking, "How can I use my skills and voice to make the world a better place?" has been a large source of my inspiration.

Advice? You are in control of your career. Having a network that includes mentors and advocates is important, but you can't depend solely on others to help you advance your career. Speak up about the way you want your career to progress and ask for the development opportunities to help you get there.

Evolution of goals? New skills? Going into 2020, I was planning to focus on growing my network. With the shift to everything virtual, this has proved rather difficult. Instead, I have turned my goals inward and have been reflecting on the type of leader I want to be and what skills and tools I need to invest in to get there.



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Cory Hall, Senior Market Specialist, Chicago Association of REALTORS

Influence? It was highly recommended by colleagues who completed the program the year prior.

Apply learnings? I plan on making what I'm learning about with relationship-building a more integral part of my professional journey.

Inspiration? My CEO! She embodies everything I aspire to become as a leader.

Advice? Whatever you do, do it excellently.

Evolution of goals? New skills? My goals have become more interpersonal rather than technical-skills based. My "new" skill in response to the pandemic is the art of excellent communication.

Emily Harris, MBA, CAE, Marketing Manager, Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals

Influence? Becoming a valued leader in my organization, in addition to other areas of my life, is very important to me. I saw this program as a unique chance to learn from other leaders and emerging leaders in the association industry and to push myself outside of my comfort zone.

Apply learnings? I hope to bring what I've learned to my organization by representing myself as a leader within my department and as I work with other departments. I also plan to continue seeking opportunities of growth within Association Forum and elsewhere in the industry.

Industry draw? Similar to what I have heard from colleagues, I did not plan to work for an association. However, as I came to understand the industry and the impact that these organizations have, I found it encouraging and exciting to work for one.

Inspiration? There are a few colleagues I worked with over the years who come to mind. They stand out to me because they consistently improve themselves through professional development. Their dedication to their careers has helped me realize how important it is to set goals for myself and to continue learning and pushing myself.

Advice? Say yes and be open to opportunities that come to you! Learning from others will help you learn more about yourself, your career goals and the path you want to take. Also, network with others in your industry; putting effort into these connections will be worthwhile.

Evolution of goals? New skills? I have expanded my goals to learn more about all areas related to virtual events. Changes from

the pandemic have helped me improve my skills related to video production, virtual event organization, digital advertising and more.

Dana Karstensen, Data Governance Product Manager, American Society of Anesthesiologists

Apply learnings? As we've talked about different topics, I make intentional plans to incorporate what we've learned so far. Also, as I read our book for the book report, I'm noting ideas that I'd like to bring to my team.

Industry draw? The culture — everyone wants to see team success, and that is the type of environment I really enjoy working in.

Advice? Get comfortable with being uncomfortable, and don't be afraid to ask all the questions.

Evolution of goals? New skills? Our organization has relied a lot more on data this year, so my team has played a much bigger role in helping our organization through the uncertain times.

Andy Krakos, Project & QA Manager, American Planning Association (APA)

Influence? APA's Leadership nominating me to sign up was a boost of confidence in my abilities that was timed perfectly to my own growing ambitions.

Apply learnings? I am soaking up everything I can that touches upon leadership! Beyond adding courses through LinkedIn Learning to my curriculum, reading books focused on leadership and embarking on an Impact Leaders Series from Loyola, I am intent on building a network that will help me grow.

Industry draw? Every association has a mission that is tied strongly to the people they support. This way of thinking about the individuals first really appeals to me.

Advice? Don't get stuck on a path you don't love just because you were led there and "it's fine." You know what you are good at. You know what you like. So, find a position and a career path you enjoy! It sounds hokey, but it's true!

Evolution of goals? New skills? This has been an opportunity to rethink the ways we go about doing our business. I've learned the importance of leading myself first and leading others with grace.

Jakeeva J. Lee, External Affairs Manager, Chicago Association of REALTORS

Influence? I'm fortunate that my CEO, Michelle Mills Clement, and association believe strongly in professional development. I've had a couple of colleagues join this program in the past, and they raved about the value it added to their personal and professional growth.

I also wanted to expand my professional network and learn directly from a variety of experienced association executives and instructors, as well as gain further insight for the CAE exam.

Apply learnings? As I look to grow my career, obtaining the strategic tools and tactics to reach another level is necessary — especially as I continue to manage down, manage up and manage myself. I also obtained deeper understanding of effective communication, conflict resolution, presentation skills and the importance of being a credible/trustworthy decision maker across all organizational levels.

Inspiration? Hands down, my CEO, Michelle Mills Clement. She is the standout example of power, influence, intelligence, boldness and empathy — while remaining humble. She has been the rocket fuel to what I have achieved in my career thus far. Furthermore, I tell her often that she has pulled me out of the “sunken place” to unlock my potential. It’s been a nonstop journey for me ever since — of which I will forever be grateful.

Advice? Start somewhere! One of my favorite words has been “try.” Push yourself out of your comfort zone. You won’t know how good you are or how to improve if you don’t at least try it. Also, grow your professional network and connect with/learn from other association peers. It’s key to your growth.

Evolution of goals? New skills? Besides traveling, life hasn’t slowed down too much for me, very fortunately. The unpredictability of the pandemic forced me not to waste time to begin (and complete) many professional goals.

Kerry Ann Lennon, Sr., Business Solutions Engineer, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, Inc.

Influence? I’m at the stage in my career where I am really looking to be able to take that next step, where my next position will be a leadership/management one. Given my desire to stay within the association industry, this program seemed like a perfect fit to help me achieve that.

Apply learnings? I hope to be able to apply a variety of aspects from the program to my career, from tips and tricks from my colleagues in the program to conflict resolution or how to network effectively. Each session of the program offers something new to learn and something that will undoubtedly be useful in my future career.

Industry draw? The idea of working and having what you do contribute to an organization that is doing good and giving back really drew me to the association world. Additionally, I’ve always admired that associations were some of the first organizations to put women and BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and people of color] in leadership positions.

Inspiration? My best friend, Richard, has inspired me not only in my career but also in my personal life. He is one of the most intelligent people I’ve ever met, a beautiful writer and the epitome of inspiring. He maintains a full-time job, consistently works as an actor (in non-COVID times, of course!), and is able to do both of these effortlessly whilst being deaf. He is someone who has never let anything hold him back, and knowing him puts a lot of things into perspective for me on a daily basis.

Advice? Be sure to take advantage of all the professional development opportunities that your company offers — be it LinkedIn Learning, paying for you to attend a conference, certification/tuition reimbursement, etc. These opportunities will prove to be invaluable as you progress in your career. Oh, and please don’t be afraid to use your PTO!

Abby MacCormack, Human Resources Manager, CCIM Institute

Influence? I was very excited to connect with and learn from other professionals in the association industry and expand my leadership skills while doing it.

Inspiration? My supervisor, Alex Hanba (VP of Operations at CCIM Institute). I have learned so much from her in my two years at CCIM — she has been an invaluable mentor!

Advice? Focus on developing your soft skills as much as you do your technical skills. Being able to problem-solve, communicate and work with others at all levels of an organization is so important.

Sarah McNulty, Governance Coordinator, Emergency Nurses Association

Influence? I was at a point in my career where I was ready to take ownership of my responsibilities.

Apply learnings? I plan on using the skills and knowledge I learn from this program to take on leadership opportunities in my association.

Inspiration? A close family friend introduced me to associations, which has set me on my career path today.

Industry draw? I always had a passion for the healthcare industry, and I wanted to do my part to support healthcare workers.

Advice? My advice for young professionals would be to take advantage of any learning opportunities and never stop learning.

Evolution of goals? New skills? Throughout the pandemic, I would say I have learned to have more of a work-life balance.

I have learned to make sure to give myself a break and that it is OK to walk away from the computer.

**Mike Thill, Business Development Specialist,
American Society of Anesthesiologists**

Influence? I know others who have been part of this program.

They talked about how valuable the program was and that they learned so much from being a part of it.

Industry draw? I didn't really have any direction in my career.

I have a sibling in the association industry who thought it would be a good fit for me. I am so glad I listened because I could not imagine working anywhere else again.

Inspiration? I would have to say my parents. Without them, I would not be where I am today.

Evolution of goals? New skills? My goals changed drastically.

Instead of creating and developing new offerings, we focused on how to best assist our members and groups during this difficult time. I definitely learned to adapt quickly to a tumultuous environment.

**Alyson Whittlesey, CFRE, Assistant Executive
Director, Foundation for Endodontics**

Influence? Following encouragement from my supervisor and learning more about the program, I was influenced to participate to enhance leadership capabilities and learn from the experiences of others.

Apply learnings? Lessons learned came in a variety of formats, including resources, career guidance and shared personal experiences, so I hope to find ways to implement each of these varieties across my daily work and throughout my career. Additionally, I hope to stay in touch with other members of the Emerging Leaders cohort. The shared experiences were some of the most powerful lessons of the program.

Inspiration? My father, who continues his commitment to the furniture industry (third generation) after nearly 50 years of service.

Industry draw? Like so many of my colleagues, I happened upon the association industry in a roundabout way in 2008. More important is what has kept me in the association industry, which is mission-driven work, passionate volunteers and the ability to work in an environment where I can regularly make an impact.

Advice? Seek guidance and mentorship, ask lots of questions and volunteer for projects that stretch your abilities.

Evolution of goals? New skills? My individual career goals remain important and center stage, but my goals for leading a strong and effective team have become more important than ever. While adapting to new work settings and circumstances, ensuring the team is efficient, working together for the collective benefit of the foundation and remaining cohesive have become top priority. I am grateful to work with a fantastic team who has made the challenges of navigating a pandemic in the workplace a positive experience.

Other 2021 Emerging Leaders:

Claire Brown

Kyle Kane

Lindsey Powell

Joseph DeAngelis

Krzysztof Litewka

Alexis Smith

Eric Fall

Samantha Luebbering

Evan Summers

Virginia Graves

Jordan McGahan

Drew Whalen

Congratulations to the 2021 Class of CAEs!



Out of the 189 professionals who earned the credential, there are 31 in the state of Illinois. Association Forum congratulates our members for this milestone achievement.

Carol Bennett, CAE, County Farm Bureau Manager,
Johnson County Farm Bureau

Emily Besser, CAE, Manager of Advocacy and Practice
Affairs, American Society for Dermatologic Surgery
Association

Yumeka Brown, CAE, Program Officer, American
Library Association

Kathleen Burbidge, CAE, External Affairs Associate
Director, Water Quality Association

Margaret Bussan, CAE, Simulation Education
Coordinator, American Society of Anesthesiologists

Alexis Curtis, MBA, CMP, CAE, Manager, Volunteers
& Meetings, American Dental Association

Heather Duve, CAE, Membership & Development
Director, Water Quality Association

Penelope Evans, CAE, Manager, Member Development,
National Association of Realtors Conventions and
Meetings Division

Kim FitzSimmons, CAE, Chief Marketing & Communi-
cations Officer, American Association of Endodontists

Mary Davis Fournier, CAE, Deputy Director, American
Library Association

James S. Goodman, CAE, Senior Vice President,
Business Group, American Dental Association

Steven G. Houg, CAE, Simulation Education Manager,
American Society of Anesthesiologists

Laura Jiggins, CAE, Market Research Manager,
Emergency Nurses Association

Marcy Johnson, CAE, CFO, American Rental Association

Barbara Kemmis, CAE, Executive Director, Cremation
Association of North America

Laura Kuhn, CAE, Membership Manager, American
College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons

Nicole Larson, CAE, Associate Director, Volunteer
Relations, Association of Legal Administrators

Robert Lendi, CAE, Chief Financial Officer, American
Society for Clinical Pathology

Allison Lundberg, CAE, Manager, Marketing and
Communications, Association Management Center

Eileen McCarthy, CAE, Executive Director, Strategic
Management Society

Erin C. Menet, MBA, CAE, Director of Governance and
Leadership Programs, CCIM Institute

Tina Morton, MBA, CAE, Director, Member
Marketing and Engagement, American Academy
of Pediatrics

Christine Murphy Peck, CAE, Senior Director,
Education and Learning Services, SmithBucklin

Lise A. Puckorius, CMP, CAE, CEO, OLC Education
& Conference Center

Florence Rivera, CAE, Director, Early Childhood
Initiatives, American Academy of Pediatrics

Debra Schaller, CAE, Vice President Marketing,
American Rental Association

Mia Short, CAE, Senior Director, Education,
Interventional Academy | Complex Cardiovascular
Catheter Therapeutics

Callan E.H. Stapleton, CAE, President, Illinois Bankers
Education Services, Illinois Bankers Association,
Springfield Office

Ellen J Sullivan, CAE, Chief Operating Officer, Society
of Gynecologic Oncology

Amy Thomasson, CAE, VP, Marketing and Membership,
Affinity Strategies

Oolagamani Ungapen, CAE, Executive Director,
American Association of Law Libraries

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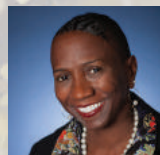
Samuel B. Shapiro Award for Chief Executive Achievement



Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, DMD
Executive Director
American Dental Association

Award Partner: ATLANTA

Association Professional Achievement Award



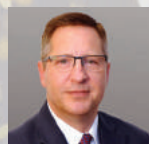
Cie B. Armstead, DBA
Director of Diversity & Inclusion
American College of Healthcare Executives

John C. Thiel Distinguished Service Award

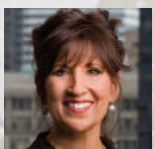


Jay Carino, MBA, CAE
Vice President of Member Services
Association of Nutrition
& Foodservice Professionals
Association Professional

Inspiring Leader Award



Rob J. Paterkiewicz, CAE, MBA, IOM
Executive Director and CEO
Selected Independent Funeral Homes



Francine P. Pepitone, CMM, MAS
Business Development Director
InnerWorkings/HH Global

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American Academy of
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
(AAPM&R)

Please join us to celebrate and recognize the Honors Awards honorees at Honors Gala, the Association Forum Foundation's premiere recognition event and fundraiser.

Learn more about sponsorship opportunities or ticket sales at: **associationforum.org**.

Association Forum Woman of Influence Award Presented to Mary Lynn Fayoumi

Association Forum is pleased to announce **Mary Lynn Fayoumi**, CAE, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, president and CEO, HR Source, as the 2021 recipient of the Woman of Influence Award.

This honor is awarded to trailblazers in the industry who have demonstrated with excellence a proven track record of innovation, impact and paying it forward through coaching, mentoring and service to others. Being named the 2021 Woman of Influence is a reflection of Fayoumi's unwavering commitment to the association community, as well as the field of human resources. Fayoumi is a highly respected speaker, trainer and advisor, as well as an authority on workplace issues such as culture, employment trends and HR management. HR Source is a Chicago-based employers' association with more than 1,100 member organizations. Countless organizations and their employees have benefited from her expertise during her years at the association.

Fayoumi currently serves on the World at Work Board of Directors and is Past Chair of the Board of Directors for both the Association Forum of

Chicagoland and the Employer Associations of America. She is also an Advisory Board Member of the Community Memorial Foundation. Last year, Fayoumi was honored by *Crain's Chicago Business* as a Notable Leader in HR.

"I am so honored to receive this award," says Fayoumi. "It's so nice to be recognized by an industry that I've learned so much from and received so much from, and I've done my best to give back wherever I could."



Million Dollar Round Table Contributes \$20,000 to John J. Prast CAE Scholarship

Association Forum thanks Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) for its continued support of the John J. Prast CAE Scholarship. Since 2012, MDRT has contributed a total of \$20,000 in support of this scholarship. The scholarship was established in the name of the MDRT's retired CEO, John J. Prast, CAE. Prast was an association professional for 37 years who was committed to excellence and strongly supported the value of the CAE credential. The goal of this scholarship is to honor Prast's contributions to the industry, demonstrate a commitment to the designation and help an aspiring CAE candidate achieve this professional goal. This award covers the cost of the CAE application fee, CAE Study Course registration and assistance with standard CAE study materials. More information and an application can be found on associationforum.org.



Bree Anne Sutherland Scholarship Recipient Reflects on Year of Education

The Bree Anne Sutherland Scholarship grants a young professional (30 years of age or under) unlimited access to Association Forum's education offerings for one year. The scholarship includes education fees and travel expenses. Last year's recipient was Bria Douglas, membership and operations coordinator for the American Academy of Prosthodontics. Douglas reflects on her experience below:

Which program was your favorite?

Definitely the Association Management Essentials course.

In a year like no other, how did Forum's education and this scholarship help you professionally?

There were several webinars hosted about COVID-19 as it pertained to associations. There was one in particular regarding the membership dues cycle during COVID that I thought was especially helpful.

Given your year of immersive education, where do you see yourself going from here (in your career, your volunteerism, participation in Forum events, etc.)?

I would definitely like to volunteer more. I briefly participated in the Welcoming Environment® committee, but due to other commitments and time restraints, I wasn't able to continue. Volunteering is definitely something I look forward to doing again at some point.

What's your favorite way to spend a Sunday? (Your answer can include pre-pandemic activities!)

Sunday is the day when I do absolutely nothing. I just lounge around all day.




New! Welcoming Environment® Certificate Program



When an association values differences and creates a Welcoming Environment — one that is comfortable, inclusive and empowering — it opens the door for innovation,

increased participation and an elevated sense of community and belonging for all. Association Forum provides the tools and resources needed to create a Welcoming Environment

at any organization. The new Welcoming Environment Certificate Program offers insights on the essentials of diversity, equity and inclusion. Upon completion of each certificate module, participants will receive an electronic badge to showcase their knowledge and skills to colleagues and friends. Also, be sure to check out the upcoming Welcoming Environment Conversation Circles to share ideas on creating an inclusive environment at your organization. You can find more details at the Welcoming Environment Resource Center at associationforum.org. 

ABOVE & BEYOND

Louisville Tourism named **Cleo Battle** as its first Black CEO. This comes after Karen Williams, who currently holds the position, announced that she is retiring. Battle, the current chief operating officer, will hold the role of president as well. "We've got a long way to go to bring our destination back to being a top destination in this country for visitation, and we'll get that work done," Battle told Louisville's local ABC News station, WHAS11.



The news station also spoke with Sadiqa Reynolds, the CEO and president of Louisville's Urban League: "There are 700 CVBs across this country, only 10 of them are led by Black people. So, this is a tremendous step forward," Reynolds said. "And part of that is recognizing and appreciating leadership regardless of what color it comes in."

Louisville Tourism is a member and partner of Association Forum.

Colleen Lawler was named executive director of the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD). Founded in 1952, AGD is the only professional association that exclusively represents the needs and interests of general dentists. AGD provides its more than 40,000 members with the resources, support and inspiration they need to deliver the best dental care and oral health education to the public.



"I am excited about the opportunity to lead AGD and its staff as it continues to provide exceptional programs and services supporting general dentists," Lawler says. "This

is a pivotal time for the organization and its members in the face of unprecedented change and challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. I expect the challenges to be demanding and the opportunities for real progress to be substantial."

Lawler has more than 20 years of association management experience in both professional and trade associations. She is the former executive director and CEO of the Society of Cardiovascular Anesthesiologists. Lawler is known for her progressive leadership, history of growing bottom- and top-line revenues, membership and market share. She's passionate about building relationships, developing high-performing teams and employee engagement.

When asked what this position means to her, Lawler says: "I look forward with great enthusiasm to my leadership role. I am joining an organization with a dedicated group of volunteers, an outstanding team and a diverse membership. I intend to champion the exciting initiatives already underway at AGD and to do my part in creating other initiatives responsive to member needs as they face the challenges of the day."

Gregg Witt has joined Cresa. Witt, a long-time real estate industry veteran, has joined Cresa Chicago as a principal. He is recognized as a leading real estate advisor to associations and other nonprofits on occupancy issues. As a subject matter expert, Witt has been a speaker at numerous events sponsored by ASAE and Association Forum and has authored a dozen articles on nonprofit real estate issues. At Cresa, he will be a member of its national nonprofit practice group and be its Chicago nonprofit practice leader.



New Association Forum Members

Individual Members

Diane Alberson, Society of Critical Care Medicine
Troy Anderson, Visit Seattle
Laura Calderon, Illinois Public Transportation Association
Mark Graham, CEO Update
Julie (Armstrong) Hewitt, Illinois NREC
Gayathri Kher, fusionSpan
Mark McSweeney, CAE, Association Societies Alliance
Adrienne McGee, American College of Surgeons
Lynn McNutt, CEO Update

Raime Merriman, Hubb
Lynn Ann Miles, CMP, CFMP, Ocean Center
Alison Milgram, PCMA
Ashtin Neuschaefer, CAE, Executive Director, Inc.
Jeanette Ocampo, Great Wolf Lodge - Illinois
Elizabeth Patel, American Fraternal Alliance
Kimberly Payne-Ward, ATL Airport District
Mary Post, American Academy of Neurology
Maggie Simkin, PCMA

Forum Plus Members

Michelle Bailey, Academy of General Dentistry
Ronda Frazier, Academy of General Dentistry
Olivia Ing, Academy of General Dentistry
Joni Taylor, American Academy of Dermatology
Jason Wilbanks, American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Gary Rejebian, American Association of Endodontists
Crystal Felton, American College of Healthcare Executives
Ishmeet Kumar, American College of Healthcare Executives

Forum Plus Members Continued

Molly Lowe, American College of Healthcare Executives
Ricardo Rivera, American College of Healthcare Executives
Grace Adams, American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Jessica White, American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Paige Zelinsky, American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians

Sara Green, American Dental Association
Trish Cleary, American Dental Hygienists' Association
Lindsay Lamb, American Dental Hygienists' Association
Keith Olenik, American Health Information Management Association

Tracie Hall, American Library Association
MaryLu Granja, American Planning Association
Maggie Kraus, American Planning Association
Donald Palmisano, American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

Bonita Hayes, American Society of Anesthesiologists
Jamie Lin, American Theological Library Association
Michael Costin, American Veterinary Medical Association
Warren Hess, American Veterinary Medical Association
Kendall Houlihan, American Veterinary Medical Association
Jaclyn Ross, American Veterinary Medical Association
Laura Didonna, Appraisal Institute
Zinat Ali, Association Management Center
Jayme Dvorack, Association Management Center
Elijah King, Bostrom

Sandra Schwarz, Bostrom
Kaitlin O'Brien, CM Services, Inc. The Association Partnership Company

Anne Walhout, CM Services, Inc. The Association Partnership Company

Rachael McLaughlin, Conference of Consulting Actuaries
Patricia Gaber, Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Monika Baldan, Emergency Nurses Association
Cheryl Barr, Emergency Nurses Association
Lisa Calendo, Emergency Nurses Association
Katie Collaro, Emergency Nurses Association
Wanda Craciun, Emergency Nurses Association
Barbara Domagala, Emergency Nurses Association
Meghan Higham, Emergency Nurses Association
Jeanene Holman, Emergency Nurses Association
Allyson Jesse, Emergency Nurses Association
Sue Kilikevice, Emergency Nurses Association
Robert Kramer, Emergency Nurses Association
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Cathy Olson, Emergency Nurses Association
Kiley Sanders, Emergency Nurses Association
Jessica Thacker, Emergency Nurses Association
Ryan Tran, Emergency Nurses Association
Nancy Williams, Emergency Nurses Association

Nicole Williams, Emergency Nurses Association
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Amy Beadle, Illinois Society of Association Executives
Christy Broccardo-Grove, Illinois Society of Association Executives

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Jessie Spangler, Mechanical Contractors Association
Rita Knapp, Million Dollar Round Table
Susan Romo, Million Dollar Round Table
Amy Panagopolous, National Commission on Correctional Health Care
Jared Brewe, Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute
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Widely known for incomparable weather and proximity to nature, greater Phoenix also offers an incredible spectrum of outdoor event venues. From uniquely Southwest scenes amid sweeping Sonoran Desert landscapes to urban venues set against the downtown skyline, this city has always celebrated the outdoors and created spaces for your attendees to experience it for themselves.

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What new hobby or interest have you developed during the pandemic?

YouTube has become a GOOD friend of mine! Working from home has caused me to upgrade my surroundings with several DIY projects. YouTube has millions of videos on easy (and more importantly, cost efficient) projects — from painting, repurposing furniture, remodeling basements, kitchen and bathroom updates, room décor ideas and everything in between. After a long day, I grab a good glass of Cabernet and tune into videos that help spark new ideas and fun challenges to transform my space. After that, I take on the challenge, and it becomes quite therapeutic

to zone out and focus all my attention on a handy after-hours/ weekend project. No phone, no TV — just me, good music and my tools. Once completed, I have an incredible sense of accomplishment and pride for completing another small home project!

— Jakeeva J. Lee, CIPS, AHWD, external affairs manager, Chicago Association of REALTORS



I've started to play board games with family: cards, backgammon, puzzles — as well as some games from my youth, such as Battleship, Mastermind and a newer board game called Otrio. I have also spent time exploring our town and surrounding paths and trails on bikes with my son, who is in eighth grade. This has been a great way to get some

quality time in with him and be outside.

It's the little things, some of the simplest things, which I know we'll look back on years from now fondly.

— Matt Sanderson, president and CEO, SmithBucklin



I'm an avid runner who always ran after work when I had a morning commute. Since working from home,

I have had time to run before work, and it has been a very enjoyable experience. I have witnessed some spectacular sun rises, and the lakefront trail is quiet and relaxing. Also, back in March when the country started shutting down, I envisioned having to stay inside for months, so I decided to buy a PlayStation 4 and become an expert gamer. I found out even in quarantine I don't have much time for video games. I'm still at a beginner level, but it's been fun learning something new.

— Jason Friske, IOM, CAE, senior director, operations, Association for Corporate Growth



I used to do indoor cycling at a local spin studio but stopped a couple of years ago, and I've always missed it. With the pandemic going into the winter months and limiting outdoor exercise options, I decided to buy a Peloton bike! I love it, especially since I'm still working from home, so it's been great to jump on it during my lunch hour and work up a sweat.

— Angelica E. Pollard, intersociety relations specialist, American Society of Anesthesiologists



A silver lining to the pandemic is I have had more time at home to focus on my physical, emotional and brain health. I have enjoyed experimenting with new recipes and preparing healthy meals. I have also been journaling and writing creatively, which has been a great way to practice gratitude and focus on the positive — I have even been writing poems! Finally, I've spent some time with the Wordscapes app on my phone. This word puzzle game challenges my mind and offers a competitive outlet.

While this has been the most challenging period many of us can remember, I'm grateful for the opportunity to have time at home to re-center myself.

— Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CAE, CEO, American Health Information Management Association



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