VANTAGEPOINT

Published by WSAE - Where the association community thrives and grows ■ Spring 2019

Spring into Stevens Point!

Executive Exchange *and* Spring Outing
June 2-4
See pages 4-8.

Plant the Foundation for Success: Professional Development & Personal Growth for You and Your Team

Wisconsin Society of Association Executives
22 N Carroll St Ste 300, Madison, WI 53703

wsae

Integrating Direct Mail for HIGH IMPACT Communication

**We have a lot to communicate and a lot of channels for delivery.
But it takes more to connect now. There is huge competition for our attention!**

THE AVERAGE PERSON RECEIVES...

2900 marketing messages a day

IT CAN TAKE UP TO...

18-20 touch points to engage

The smarter you are about HOW YOU COMMUNICATE, the more likely your message will get through.

ADVANTAGES OF DIRECT MAIL

TAILORED: Direct mail allows you to personalize each piece you mail. In fact, a full-color piece with a person's name and more sophisticated database information can increase the response rate by up to 500% versus not doing any of these things (Cannon Solutions America research).

TACTILE: When your members can touch and feel your content and invitations, they have a stronger emotional reaction (Millward Brown Agency research).

TIMELESS: Think that direct mail only works with older members? Not so. Recent studies show that Millenials have digital fatigue and like to receive mail. In fact, they enjoy the tactile experience and even share it with friends (USPS research).

TRACKABLE: Direct mail is more trackable than ever. Use mail tracking to know when your direct mail arrives in mailboxes. Use call tracking, PURLs, and landing pages to track which leads came from your direct mail campaign. Use all of this to track ROI.

Talk with us about how multi-channel, integrated direct mail campaigns can engage current members, reinvigorate lapsed members, and build interest among potential members.

BADGER GROUP
PRINT, MARKETING, & MAIL SOLUTIONS

CONTACT THE BADGER GROUP
Sally O'Brien | 920-563-1135
sallyo@badgergroup.com | www.BadgerGroup.com
100 East Blackhawk Drive, Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

CONTENTS

About VantagePoint

VantagePoint is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October. The deadline for submission of copy and advertising is the first of the month preceding publication. For information about advertising rates, contact the WSAE office.

Call for Authors

We would love to hear any article ideas that you have!
Please visit wsae.org (Engage>Call for Authors) for more information.

Wisconsin Society of Association Executives

@WSAEtweets

WSAE Wisconsin Society of Association Executives

Wisconsin Society of Association Executives

Wisconsin Society of Association Executives
22 N. Carroll St., Suite 300; Madison, WI 53703
(608) 310-7850 | fax (608) 251-5941
www.wsae.org

Advance Using Your Childhood Learning Blocks

by Kristina Mattson-Grimm, CAE

Growing up, do you remember how you felt when someone was in your corner, providing constructive support, praise and encouragement? Whether being enthusiastic to pursue an interest or anxious about the unknown, having the tools and an advocate forged us through.

A recent *Inc.* magazine article suggests ways to raise your children to be leaders. The building blocks for adults shouldn't be different, should they? I also saw a parallel while reading the book *Becoming Essential* by James E. Meyers, which asks if the goal of associations is to survive or to thrive. The concepts supporting a flourishing, relevant business can also apply to individuals.

Used regularly, all of us, regardless of generation or career stage, can embrace the following building blocks to increase our metabolism for effective leadership skills. In turn, supporting your members on their path toward better leadership will be positive for your association.

Persevere

Never quit! Persistence is a learning tool to be embraced. If a child is struggling, we tell them to keep their chin up, move forward and support them. Do the same with staff and your association members.

Don't be discouraged. It's often the last key in the bunch that opens the lock.
- Author Unknown

Invest

Summer camp was common for young people. It contained varying emotions such as excitement and trepidation, as well as exploration and fun. Today, continue exploring your career path through learning events. Step out of the office and relish the fresh context while building your connections.

Always walk through life as if you have something new to learn and you will.
- Vernon Howard

No

This word was used frequently growing up for our own good (so we were told). When used with an explanation, it built understanding. As our personal and professional lives converge, we need to focus on priorities which demonstrate value to our members and our personal goals.

*Sometimes we need to say **no** so we have more time to say **yes**.*
- Suzette Hinton

Understand

Who didn't have a conflict with their parents or friends growing up? Disagreement with a co-worker? Build your emotional intelligence by listening to understand. This sets the stage to celebrate varying perspectives, presenting a growth opportunity. The Carnegie Institute of Technology shows that IQ can help you be successful just 20% in life. The remaining 80% depends on your EQ.

Chair's message, continued on page 23

Calendar of Events

See the calendar at www.wsae.org for more information on these events, and to register.

Madison CEO Roundtable
April 15
Eno Vino at the AC Hotel, Madison

Milwaukee CEO Roundtable
May 23
Moe's Irish Pub, Wauwatosa

2019 Executive Exchange
June 2-3
SentryWorld and Holiday Inn Stevens Point - Convention Center, Stevens Point

2019 Spring Outing
June 3-4
SentryWorld and Holiday Inn Stevens Point - Convention Center, Stevens Point

2019 Summit
October 28-29
Potawatomi Hotel and Casino, Milwaukee

Webinar SERIES

Plan It, Stage It, Sell It. Stay on Message As You Step to the Podium
April 18

Go from Worrier to Warrior. Practical and Fun Stress Reduction
May 9

Using Digital Analytics to Drive Your Association
June 18

Check out the webinar archives for on-demand viewing www.wsae.org.






- EXPANDING SEPTEMBER 2019
- ADDING A 52,000-SQUARE-FOOT BALLROOM
- DOUBLING IN SIZE: NOW 212,000 SQUARE FEET OF FLEXIBLE CONVENTION SPACE
- 10 MORE MEETING ROOMS, FOR A TOTAL OF 45




OUR NUMBERS MAKE SURE YOU CAN REACH YOURS

In September 2019, Kalahari Resorts & Conventions is expanding the venue that consistently delivers attendance-increasing events of all sizes. More space, more amenities and more first-class service means that your convention will be even more incredible.

Kalahari® RESORTS & CONVENTIONS

WISCONSIN DELLS, WI

KalahariMeetings.com

Call 855-411-4605 to learn more




WSAE Annual Spring Outing to Be Packed with Education and Fun

June 3-4, 2019

The WSAE Spring Outing is the perfect mix of education of fun! Develop your network among like-minded people with similar, yet different, experiences, who are also investing in themselves, moving forward and contributing to their industry. The Spring Outing will kick off with an afternoon of educational programming, followed by the Participants & Pairings Party. In addition to the golf tournament held on Day 2, the Outing will offer non-golfers the opportunity to visit sponsors out on the course for games and refreshments, and to engage in a three-hour workshop. The event will conclude with a reception, offering one last chance to network as we celebrate golf award winners.

Location

We heard you - Based on member feedback, we are excited to be holding the WSAE Executive Exchange and Spring Outing at a new location that is centrally located for all our members. Most members are within a short 1-2 hour drive from Stevens Point, where we are partnering with the Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, as well as hosts SentryWorld and the Stevens Point Holiday Inn & Convention Center.

SentryWorld's famed "Flower Hole" features 33,000 flowers surrounding the gentle sloping green.

Featured Presenters

Artificial Intelligence: An End to Work as We Know It
Nick Myers, Founder & Creative Director, RedFox Creative

Creativity on Cue - Creative Power Tools for Anyone Who Needs to be Capital 'C' Creative NOW!
D.P Knudten, Chief Collaborator, COLLABORATOR Creative

The Big Dance: Meetings Contracts that Make You Look Like a Hero
Janeé Pelletier, MBA, CMP, DES, Vice President of Communications & Events, Learning Undefeated

Don't miss the Spring Outing, or these other upcoming WSAE events! For more information, visit www.wsae.org.

Executive Exchange, A CEO Retreat ▪ June 2-3
SentryWorld, Stevens Point

The Summit ▪ October 28-29
Potawatomi Hotel & Casino, Milwaukee

Spring Outing Presenter

Protect Your *Power Cycle*

An edited excerpt from *ROTOMA—The ROI of Social Media 'Top of Mind'*

by D.P. Knudten

Creativity is such an elusive thing. But if you have to *be creative* as a fundamental part of your day-to-day job, and you're paying attention to the periods when you're most productive (or completely unproductive), you're sure to have noticed a few things about the way you work.

I found this out the hard way very early in my career as an advertising copywriter. Come mid- to late-afternoon, I could wrestle with a problem for literally hours and never come to a satisfactory conclusion. But it never failed—the same vexing issue that eluded me the late afternoon before was solved dead in the first 30 minutes of the next day.

Why? A fresh brain and rested body? A subconscious mind that worked on the problem throughout the night? Just not so tired, hungry and aggravated? Yes, to all of the above, but an even bigger yes to recognizing my personal *Power Cycle*. There was one insurmountable problem at that job, though. My boss' Power Cycle started at around 7 p.m., and he was a *nobody leaves before I do* type. Yeah, that didn't last long.

IT'S NOT ABOUT PANDERING TO THE FRAGILE ARTIST AND THEIR OH, SO PRECIOUS SCHEDULE PREFERENCES. IT'S ABOUT GETTING WHAT YOU REALLY WANT: BRILLIANT, CREATIVE WORK.

Creative Power Cycles are personal. And not easily altered.

I didn't waste any time trying to adjust my naturally diurnal cycles to match my boss' nocturnal ones. All that would have gotten me was a lot of physical and mental pain, and a portfolio of crappy work. I got out of that job, learned to recognize and defend my Power Cycle, and was not only a lot happier but more productive too, in both quality and quantity.

As I realized this truth about myself, I started to see it in others as well. My longtime art director confrere Wayne Koenig, now a standout UX Lead at Raven Software, is notorious for killing it with amazing work created in the wee hours of the morning. He's naturally nocturnal. I'm naturally diurnal.

We managed to work together seamlessly for close to a decade—primarily during the periods when our Power Cycles overlapped. We'd disengage, go about our individual roles as required, and then reconvene when necessary, typically when our Power Cycles overlapped again. Is that any way to run a Creative department? Damn right it is, and we have the awards to prove it.

As a Creative Director, I made it a point to determine my team members' individual Power Cycles as quickly as possible—and then schedule things appropriately. Late afternoon concepting meetings? A complete waste of time. Early morning job starts for my late owl art director? Same thing.

It's not about pandering to the fragile artist and their oh, so precious schedule preferences. It's about getting what you really want: brilliant, creative work.

This is no excuse. It's biology.

The mental effort required to create (not modify, edit, kern, or optimize) is significant. A writer friend of mine once told me that he believed a focused, bent-on-perfection writer could only effectively write for two hours a day. And I agree.

There are outliers, of course. Isaac Asimov is said to have written at least eight hours a day, seven days a week. That worked for him (as one of the most prolific authors in history with over 500 significant published works). But seriously, he's the exception.

Power Cycle: you only get one a day.

For the vast majority of people, there is a single three-to-four-hour period each day that enables the best, most creative, heavy-lift work to happen. I call them *Power Cycles*. But unlike a machine that, once started, can keep cranking out work while given enough fuel, the creative engine is susceptible to just about every kind of distraction there is.

To be clear, a huge amount of your daily work will not be spent on 'heavy lift' creativity, and does not require Power Cycle-level energy. Things like billing, conference reports, email processing, appointment coordination and all the standard TSCODB (time sucking cost of doing business) can, and will, burn kilowatts of creative energy.

That's why I assign such activity to hours outside my personal Power Cycle. There's no need to waste your best mental energy on a "Sounds good. I'll see you Tuesday." email response when you could use it to solve an intractable creative challenge.

Quality writing consists of three distinct phases: Conception, Creation and Optimization.

The hardest, heaviest lift? Conception. The lightest, *any time of day will do* activity: Optimization. And right smack dab in the middle in terms of effort and energy: Creation.

Without a Concept, the *what am I actually going to write about*, nothing else can happen. But for me, at least, the second I know the Concept, the challenge often shifts to a test of typing speed as the ideas are coming in during the Creation phase. While it doesn't require quite the same power level as Conception, it's still pretty energy-intensive.

Optimization is the phase that finalizes the written product. Spell- and grammar-checking, character or word counting when necessary, editing for clarity and audience—all of these things can be done during those off-Power Cycle hours. It's not that these tasks don't require professional diligence, it's that they don't require Concept or even Creative energy levels to get the job done well.

What's your species? Know it—and respect it.

So what are you, an up-with-the-sun songbird or an out-all-night owl? You must recognize and embrace that about yourself. And try to get more specific than that—all the way down to the hours in your most productive window.

It's critically important to know when you are naturally at your creative best—and to then protect that peak period from distractions. During your Power Cycle, don't just ignore email, turn it off. You can deal with all that stuff during off-peak hours, and if they really need you, they'll find other ways to get ahold of you.

Power Cycle scheduling in action.

Let's play out one common scenario: scheduling a meeting. The first step is to understand what the meeting is all about, and its desired outcome or product. Only then can you appropriately schedule for your entire team based on the creative energy level required to achieve that desired outcome.

A weekly status meeting doesn't require much, so schedule it whenever everybody's outside their personal prime time. A big all-call brainstorm that requires the best from everyone? Schedule it for that elusive golden hour when your entire team is ready for prime time.

If you've ever sat in a simple status meeting that happens to be scheduled during your Power Cycle, you really understand what pain is as you can actually feel your Creative energy being wasted.

GTIGCO (Garbage Time In, Garbage Creative Out)

There are people (typically called *Managers*) who may object to all of this. I can hear them screaming "Yer gettin' paid, so you be creative right now, 'cause I said so."

If you're stuck with someone like that, I feel for you. But if your title is *Creative Director*, you know that true creativity is a fickle beast. It doesn't come just because you call. It arrives as a lightning bolt to the receptive, searching mind—and more often than not, during that mind's Power Cycle.

What's your goal? To have a meeting? Or to have a successful one?

I was once mocked loud and long by an account-side colleague for my meeting scheduling *modus operandi*. It stipulated that "no significant meetings or presentations happen on Mondays or Fridays, or later than 3 p.m. daily."

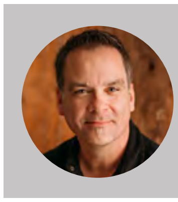
But guess what? That strategy worked wonders for the quality of work created, and client acceptance of the work presented, at those meetings.

Why? Power Cycle management. Everyone involved was biologically predestined to perform at their best—and so they did. Clients would arrive rested and receptive. Our team the same. When you purposely remove negative biologic universals like hunger and fatigue from the equation, it's no surprise when the equation leads to a solution everyone can agree with.

Did that mean such significant meetings couldn't occur on Mondays or Fridays? Of course not. True professionals can be called upon to perform with excellence whenever necessary. But if you are setting the meeting and have the choice, schedule your power-hitters when they naturally hit most effectively.

Why, oh why, would you ever schedule anything that mattered when everyone in the meeting is not inclined, by simple biology, to give their undivided attention.

As a *capital 'C' Creative*, the reason people are going to seek your services is because (surprise) you are ***Creative***. Defend your creativity cubs like a diligent lioness—or watch them, and your work quality and quantity, die. ■



D.P. Knudten is Chief Collaborator at COLLABORATOR Creative and co-author of the book *ROTOMA - The ROI of Social Media 'Top of Mind.'*

Spring Outing Presenter

If You've Got It, Flaunt It!

Developing a great meeting RFP

by Janeé Pelletier, MBA, CMP, DES

Having sourced hundreds of meetings and conventions over the last decade, I've learned that hotels have a love-hate relationship with association business. When the economy is tough, they're a trusty and reliable revenue source. But when the economy is running hot (like now), association meetings aren't always so appealing to many properties.

In the not-so-distant past, association meeting planners were able to book four- and even five-star properties for their groups, but as the economy has rebounded, the RFP process has become intensely competitive. Many association planners have found themselves stressed and struggling to find the right property—or any property—for their events.

What's a planner to do? Try taking a page from the sales playbook and learn how to sell the value of your business during the RFP process.

Become your group's advocate

In this sellers' market, *heads in beds* is no longer enough. Individual sales managers have less autonomy in choosing and chasing business, because many business decisions are controlled at the revenue management level. Potential business is balanced against other opportunities for ideal fit and analyzed for profitability.

It's no longer just about whether your group fits in the meeting space and whether there are enough sleeping rooms; the revenue manager at the hotel evaluates your total financial impact for the hotel. Association meetings often come up short—if the financial profile of your group isn't right for the hotel, properties may decline to bid on your event.

To compete, planners must become advocates for their business during the RFP process. Meeting managers can and should develop RFPs that communicate the full value of the business their group brings to a property—a sales tool, of sorts, to combat the perception that association meetings are less profitable.

By giving the hotel the full financial picture, you are communicating the full value of your business up front. You can also overcome any potential shortcomings in the hotel's eyes —such asking for a low room rate—by highlighting your group's spending in other areas.

More than just dates, rates and space

You may not have thought about the whole financial picture of your group in such a holistic way, so shifting your attitude from buyer to seller can take some getting used to. Accurate history is one of your group's biggest assets, and increases negotiating leverage on everything from meeting space rental to food and beverage minimums.

Take the time to dig through your reports and prepare a thorough history before releasing your RFP. A holistic group history includes as many details as possible about:

- Audited housing history for three (or more!) years including rates and shoulder dates, both contracted and actualized
- Pattern of rooms picked up each night of your block, broken out by each hotel for citywides
- Bed type if known: king vs. double, single occupant vs. sharewiths
- F&B spend, on and off property
- Audiovisual spending

If you are new to your position or don't have great post-conference reports from past events, it's easy to call the hotel and ask. Generally, someone in billing will be able to help you once you explain what you need. After every meeting, insist on an audit of the hotel's reservation system against your registration list. I've found as many as 800 room nights booked outside the block during a post-meeting audit!

Taking your RFP from good to great

The list above presents an excellent picture of the primary revenue that your association brings to the property, but many

AFTER EVERY MEETING, INSIST ON AN AUDIT OF THE HOTEL'S RESERVATION SYSTEM AGAINST YOUR REGISTRATION LIST. I'VE FOUND AS MANY AS 800 ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED OUTSIDE THE BLOCK DURING A POST-MEETING AUDIT!

other factors determine the profitability of your group overall. A great RFP includes additional details about your guests, affiliates and partners, and the contribution that they're also making to the hotel's bottom line.

Do you have sponsors who host events on or off property, or entertain guests in the hotel restaurants? You may not know the scale and scope of these events for this year's event, but if you request information from the hotel before the meeting takes place they are generally willing to track and report back to you at the post-con. Hotels can often provide you with excellent reports on outlet revenue over your group dates, as well as attendee services usage, such as golf, spa, etc. The trick to capturing this data is to provide lots of advance notice before your meeting takes place—the hotel can track it, but only if you let them know before your group arrives.

Prioritizing concessions also helps the sales manager understand which perks and freebies are critical and which can be scaled down or replaced with something of similar value. Provide as much detail as possible when asking for concessions. If, for example, your group requests complimentary internet in the meeting space, provide details on number of users and required bandwidth to help the sales manager justify the cost. When asking for upgrades or suites, indicate dates or pattern needed. Full details on what you need saves both time and anguish later on in the process.

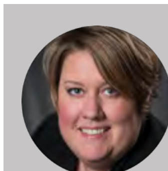
Enlist your allies in the fight

Finally, CVBs and DMOs are excellent resources to help you understand the value your meeting brings to the destination overall. Your bureau contact can help you understand your economic impact on the city, which includes delegate spending in restaurants, attractions, taxes, and all the ancillary industries that meetings support. Many CVBs can provide you with information from the Destinations International event impact calculator, as well.

Learn from past mistakes

If you find yourself in a situation where a hotel turns down an RFP, ask what factors played into the decision. Sales managers hate to disappoint their clients, and it's fair to ask if there is additional information you could have provided to better illustrate how your meeting would have profited the hotel.

You may find that a slight shift in one or several factors would make your meeting more attractive, and easier to place next time. ■



Janeé Pelletier, MBA, CMP, DES,
is Vice President of Communications & Events, Learning Undefeated.

Build a Better A/V RFP

by Tom Graybill

One of the most useful—and potentially confusing and frustrating—tools in planning meetings is the RFP. When it comes to the A/V aspects of your event, a poorly composed RFP can lead to the wrong equipment, the wrong budget and the wrong results for your clients and audience.

How do you build a better RFP? Like anything, it starts with the basics.

AVOID THE RESPONSE THAT PROVIDES JUST A LUMP SUM. IN THAT SCENARIO, THE QUOTE MAY BE A LOW-BALL ONE TO GET YOU IN THE DOOR, AND THEN YOU COULD BE SUBJECTED TO ADDITIONS THAT WEREN'T ORIGINALLY ACCOUNTED FOR ONCE YOU ARE ONSITE.

The basics

Every RFP should include a description of the event. This will help your production partner understand the scope and intention of the show. The description should include the dates and times of the show, venue or venues (including the rooms you will be occupying), audience size, name of the event and frequency (such as yearly or monthly).

The venue and room information are crucial, as elements like ceiling height, room size, server access, union considerations and other factors will have a bearing on the equipment, labor and creative components needed for your event.

If there are pictures of previous shows that can be included in the RFP or available online, definitely add them. These extra elements will help the responders note the level of complexity in the show and see what design elements have already been used.

Your deadline for response and contact information for questions and submittal complete the basics.

It is always helpful to provide at least a budget range for potential vendors to let them know what ballpark they are playing in. This may eliminate getting responses that are well over your budget and not actionable. But be aware that your budget may not be sufficient based on the location of your meeting, the going rate for crew and equipment, union regulations, logistics of the room and other concerns.

The next step

After the basics, the next step is to add detail to the event so your A/V folks can prescribe the best solutions. This generally takes one of two major directions, with lots of gray area in between.

The first direction is to provide a detailed description of each element in your show that will need to be supported by A/V. A paragraph each on your general session, breakouts, trade show, off-site and any other components will aid in determining the right gear and team for the job.

The second direction involves providing an equipment list, either based on a previous event (perhaps the meeting from last year) or experience with a similar show. This is a great way to help the responder determine the level of expectations and bid accordingly. They can also see opportunities to be more efficient if they can provide better, and potentially cheaper, solutions due to the advance of technology or their particular mix of equipment.

Please note that if you provide an equipment list, your new vendor may not have the exact mixer or projector that was used last time. However, a good provider will be able to get a comparable model based on the level of gear you have cited.

The best approach would be to provide both elements, if possible. More time spent upfront to make your RFP as clear as possible will yield better results and fewer questions along the way.

The extras

Encourage your bidders to provide additional ideas which can enhance your show. You can always say "no" to the options, but there may be opportunities that you haven't thought of that could be a good fit.

This also allows you to get a sense of the personality of the vendor. Do you want to work with a group that only offers you the minimum that you asked for? Or do you want a group that is aiming to get you the best bang for your buck?

Provide the respondents with a chance to tell you about their organization—what they've done, who they've served, what you can expect as a client. Think about what you need to know to ensure that you get not only the right equipment, but the right service for your show.

Stay focused

Responding to an RFP can be a lengthy process. Don't add to this time by including extraneous questions for your potential vendors. Time is precious, and a supplier faced with a series of questions about their business or other topics that don't relate to the job at hand may simply decide not to respond. The result is fewer choices for you and potentially missing out on a company that can offer the best results.

Getting the right response

Now that you have asked for what you need, how do you compare apples-to-apples?

Every A/V group will have a standard way they respond to inquiries. Often, the main difference is the level of detail. Without direction, each responder will provide the quote their way, making it difficult to decipher and compare quotes.

If possible, categorize your needs so you can compare the totals for each aspect of your event. The goal isn't to piecemeal equipment from one vendor for this and another for that, but rather to note any red flags due to discrepancies between the numbers provided by your respondents.

Some categories could be *Creative/Show Direction*, *Projection* (projectors, screens, etc.), *Lighting*, *Audio*, *Staging*, *Breakouts*, *Trade Show*, *Off-site*, *Labor*, etc. This approach should bring some consistency to the responses and make comparing easier.

Within each of these sections, request line items wherever possible. Ask your vendors to provide specifications for projectors (lumens), screens (screen size, rear- or front-projection), monitors (inches), and numbers of lights, microphones and production crew.

Avoid the response that provides just a lump sum. In that scenario, the quote may be a low-ball one to get you in the door, and then you could be subjected to additions that weren't originally accounted for once you are onsite.

Reading the response

Hopefully, if you have followed these tips, you will receive responses that are fairly easy to compare. If you have specified how you want the quote formatted, responsible vendors should follow your directions. If they didn't, you need to evaluate how this lack of attention to detail could impact their performance onsite.

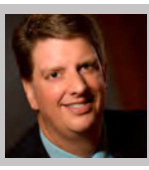
Depending on your show, sometimes the numbers are all you need to see. But even then, look closely at any discrepancies in the equipment from one vendor to another. Note if technicians are assigned to your group or are on call. Ask what kind of service you can expect if something breaks. See if there are additional fees or service charges that are detailed outside of the budget number, especially those listed in small type at the bottom.

If creative aspects are also included, how appropriate are they to your group—in both budget and approach? A caring partner will provide solutions in line with your budget, rather than waste your time with grandiose ideas.

While it may be tempting to think *equipment-is-equipment-is-equipment*, comparing solely on price removes the essential human element from the equation. A/V for your event is not a commodity and shouldn't be viewed in such a disposable manner. Do you want to have to explain to your audience that although the A/V didn't meet their expectations, it was inexpensive?

Be courteous to those who did respond to your RFP and were not selected. A simple email thanking them for their efforts is both good manners and good business.

A good RFP and response puts your event on a winning path, and allows you to concentrate on the 10,000 other things that are part of your show! ■



Tom Graybill is Vice President, Sales for Tri-Marq Communications, Inc., and is a WSAE member.


{Madison, WI}
A SPACE THAT ENERGIZES.
A city that entertains.
Frank Lloyd Wright designed this building to be different. Its views, its curves, its location. Every feature was chosen with one purpose: to inspire. It's a space that encourages team building by day, in a location that fosters team bonding by night.
Visit MononaTerrace.com.
LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN
LEED
GOLD
2015
MONONA TERRACE®
Where business and inspiration meet.
©2019 Monona Terrace

Educational Content Important for Future Member Growth

by Tracy Grzybowski

For the past five years, OmniPress has conducted an online survey of association professionals, tracking the evolution of conference content and the role it plays in attracting and engaging new attendees and members. Each year, the results are published in OmniPress' annual State of the Conference Industry Report. This year's report indicates that, perhaps more than ever before, there is significant opportunity to leverage educational content to drive organizational growth—if associations can first address some pressing content challenges.

Attendees want more content choices, and associations are delivering

It should come as no surprise that 60% of survey respondents acknowledged that education is the primary reason members choose to attend a conference. As the voice of the industry, associations take this responsibility very seriously as they source, select and distribute relevant content. More than 60% of conference planners are noting shifts in how attendees prefer to receive and consume conference content and are responding accordingly.

Conference demographics are more diverse than ever, with four generations now living concurrently in the workplace. Additionally, there are more ways than ever for people to consume content, which is creating a broad range of preferences among attendees. As a result, associations are providing conference content in more formats than ever before. On average, respondents indicate they provide 2.6 different formats at a single event, up from 2.4 in 2018 and 2.1 in 2017. They also expect this number to continue to grow in the coming year.

GENERATION Z WILL REPORTEDLY ECLIPSE MILLENNIALS AS THE LARGEST GENERATION—EVEN LARGER THAN BABY BOOMERS. THE PIPELINE FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS IS SUBSTANTIAL, IF ASSOCIATIONS CAN CONNECT WITH THEM.

As positive as it is to see associations acknowledge and address these changes, it does create challenges and tradeoffs. Organizations are spending more time managing this content, from sourcing and collecting, to handling last-minute changes, which potentially reduces the time they can focus on strategic opportunities that could fuel long-term growth.

Cross-team collaboration, generational readiness are where associations should focus next

Since the report's inception in 2015, increasing attendance has been the number one goal for meeting planners. However, most respondents are still reporting only flat-to-modest growth year-over-year. Report data also shows that conference attendance trends typically mirror membership trends. For associations to attract and engage new audiences, conference and membership teams have an opportunity to collaborate more closely, synchronizing marketing, messaging and even pricing strategies. Today, many initiatives still tend to be executed within pre-existing silos.

A common tool both teams have in their arsenal is the association's highly-valued educational content. Unfortunately, this resource tends to be under-utilized, the report indicates. More than half of respondents re-use conference content, primarily to promote next year's event. While this is effective in creating a highly motivating sense of FOMO, or "Fear of Missing Out," among new attendees, it may not go far enough. Studies indicate that the youngest of young professionals—also known as Generation Z—are actively seeking opportunities for learning and development on more than just an annual basis. As organizations look to shift the demographic profile of their attendees and members, there is opportunity to use this content to extend the conference experience and the association value beyond the venue.

It's a strategy that associations will need to spend more time on, and soon. Generation Z will reportedly eclipse Millennials as the largest generation—even larger than Baby Boomers. The pipeline for prospective members is substantial, if associations can connect with them. Today, associations are not seeing a corresponding rise in the number of Millennial and Generation Z members because only 7% of organizations have developed a strategy to address their needs—a number that has remained stagnant over the past three years.

As young professionals become more prevalent in the workplace, the conversation as it stands today is going to evolve beyond content mix. Survey respondents are noting a rise in newer learning themes among conference attendees, such as content that is served in smaller, more digestible pieces (or, micro-content), delivered within interactive, dynamic and collaborative learning environments. Moving forward, conference planners will be tasked with identifying how to apply these emerging trends within the event setting, and how they may need to potentially re-think the conference format of the future. ■

Tracy Grzybowski is Director of Marketing at Omnipress, a WSAE member. To download the full 2019 Conference Report, visit www.omnipress.com/2019-report.

Trisha Pugal

Retiring President and CEO, Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association

THE HONOR OF SERVING AS PRESIDENT OF WSAE IN 1996 WAS MADE EVEN MORE MEANINGFUL BECAUSE MY FATHER-IN-LAW, WHO INTRODUCED ME TO THIS PROFESSION, HAD ALSO SERVED AS WSAE'S PRESIDENT MANY YEARS PRIOR. I BELIEVE WE MAY BE THE ONLY RELATED PAST PRESIDENTS IN WSAE'S RECORDS.

How did you end up working in the world of associations?

I was working in inside sales for a company that was moving out of town when my father-in-law, Pete Pugal, the Executive Director of the Bowling Proprietors of Wisconsin, told me he thought I would be good at association work. He asked me to work there to help him phase into retirement over a two-year period. I began as their Director of Membership Services. When he retired, I was hired as the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association, where I served for nine years before leaving for my current position as President and CEO for the Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association. I will be retiring at the end of May from this most honorable profession that both challenges and rewards those investing in it.

You have been with WH&LA for 25 years. What changes have you seen in the industry over that time?

There have been many! The increase of franchised properties, the decrease in the number of wonderful small seasonal family resorts in the Northwoods, and the expansion of independent boutique or niche lodging properties are just the start of the list.

What aspects of your position have helped hold your interest?

My intention may never have been to stay with one organization for 25 years, but I have always believed that if you don't keep learning and become too complacent, it is time to move on. Frankly, I am still learning and have never had the chance to become complacent. Something that has always driven me is the interest in making the industry and our organization better than before—and that, of course, never ends. It also helps significantly to have great leaders and team members over the years who believe in and support what you are doing.

Please share a favorite success, accomplishment or memory.

The honor of serving as President of WSAE in 1996 was made even more meaningful because my father-in-law, who introduced me to this profession, had also served as WSAE's President many years prior. I believe we may be the only related Past Presidents in WSAE's records. While he had passed away the year before I served, it was still special. I would never have joined this amazing profession without the opportunity he provided.

What's one thing WH&LA does to keep members engaged?

Our members, the owners and general managers of all types of lodging properties around the state, have 24/7 responsibilities and frequently work long hours. We have taken the approach of not asking Board and Committee members to take on tasks that our team can do, and instead focus on tapping their industry knowledge and decision-making skills when they participate in our meetings. We are fortunate when they see the value in participating, so we don't ask them to read lots of materials before attending or do follow-up tasks after. That does put more pressure on our team to condense and deliver the important background information onsite, enabling them to know what is needed to make good decisions that we then can put into action.

Looking back, what "lessons learned" can you share?

When I started, I replaced both the President/CEO and the Executive Vice-President, who happened to be married and were retiring together. It was three weeks before a board meeting and all I had was the agenda without the background on what our leaders expected. The immediate lesson I learned was to anticipate what they needed to make decisions and to make sure we earned their trust and loyalty, and never let them down. Anticipation, preparation, delivery and strategic thinking works.

Do you have any words of wisdom for young professionals starting out in the association industry?

A combination of confidence, integrity, hard work and a humble respect for your leaders will never fail. My favorite saying is from Henry Ford: *Think you can, think you cannot… either way you will be right.* ■

Spring Clean Your Digital Self

by Kim Schardin, MBA, CAE

HOLDING ON TO ACCOUNTS AND FILES THAT YOU DON'T ACTUALLY WANT ANY MORE NEEDLESSLY EXPOSES YOU TO RISK... SO, LET'S CLEAN UP YOUR DIGITAL WORLD, NOW.

Oh, the joy of a cleaned-out home and office—Out with the old and everything in its place. But what about the non-physical? What about the cloud, cyberspace, the dark web and your digital clone?

Most people have old email accounts floating around, forgotten thumb drives in a drawer and years-worth of stuff in a downloads folder. All that stuff is a liability. Holding on to accounts and files that you don't actually want any more needlessly exposes you to risk. Your devices can be lost, stolen or hacked, and the General Data Protection Regulation reminds us of the perils of big company data breaches that expose your information. So, let's clean up your digital world, now.

First, address your physical devices. Destroy old CDs, thumb drives and external hard drives you don't need anymore. (Don't forget the box of floppy disks in your basement. Seriously.) Consider old PCs, gaming consoles and smart home gadgets, backing up anything you want from those devices before wiping them.

Next, deal with your current devices. Sort through your desktop and clean out your documents folder, eliminating old PDFs of credit card statements or medical forms. And now is a good time to store needed files on a password-protected external hard drive and take them off devices you use every day.

Now, go deeper. Get into applications, Internet services and the cloud. The most important account to consider is your email, the central data hub of your online life. Your email account could be a valuable prize for a hacker, because it may contain information about a host of other people (friends, family members, coworkers) in addition to yourself. Deleting emails you no longer need and exporting old emails you still want to a hard drive is a smart way to reduce risk for everyone. And don't forget about old email accounts (think Yahoo and Road Runner).

And as with thumb drives, you may have random files in all sorts of services that offer some free storage like Box, Google Drive and Dropbox. Sort through what's there and eliminate what you don't need.

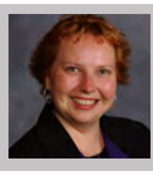
Cancel those accounts. Look for apps you don't use anymore and shut them down. Are your photos backing up to four different services for some reason? Clean them up. Why is that calorie counting app from 2014 still on your phone? Cancel and delete. This all creates unnecessary risk.

Before you delete the software, clean out and close your account with the company so it retains the smallest amount of data possible about you. Closing an account doesn't necessarily mean that a company deletes all your data or eliminates the basic things it knows about you—data handling procedures should be laid out in an app's terms of service—but it keeps the account from staying active and potentially continuing to collect data. For example, a fitness app that you haven't thought about in months could be tracking your steps, heart rate or even your whereabouts without you realizing.

Continue these best practices as you inevitably accumulate more digital stuff. Think twice about downloading fad apps or starting free trials. Back up what you need and then wipe the data storage on hardware as soon as you move on to something new. And when possible delete documents as soon as you're done with them. You are the steward who needs to understand and control your digital self.

Ah, there you go! The most awesome spring cleaning ever. Now everything is truly in its place. ■

Resource: United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team, https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST05-011



Kim Schardin, MBA, CAE, is an association executive with Executive Director, Inc., and is a WSAE member.

BROOKFIELD CONFERENCE CENTER

Coming in 2020

Conveniently located along I-94, Brookfield is a cost effective option for corporate events and social functions. Whether you're looking for a classic conference space or a less traditional setting, Brookfield offers a variety of unique meeting space perfect for your special event. With meeting facilities from 550 square feet to 44,000 square feet, and over 2,500 hotel rooms, Brookfield is the suburban location you've been looking for. Call today and let us exceed your expectations.

- Located along the I-94 corridor, between Milwaukee and Madison.
- Home to 150 restaurants, 16 hotels, and 3 million sq. ft. of shopping.
- 18,000 and 6,000 sq. ft. ballrooms.
- State of the art boardroom.
- 10,000 sq. ft. pre-function atrium and 9,000 sq. ft. outdoor plaza.
- On-site catering, beverage service and attached Hilton Garden Inn.
- 168 attached rooms and 2,512 sleeping rooms within a 3-mile radius.

800-388-1835 www.visitbrookfield.com

Three Digital Trends Associations Should Start, Stop and Continue Doing

by Sandy Marsico

As part of your annual review process, use the *start, stop, continue* retrospective technique. It's a great way to recognize successes and opportunities for growth for individuals, teams and organizations. Thinking about the digital transformations associations have experienced recently, here are some membership organization trends we are watching.

Start

Start creating a culture of data. Using data to inform your decisions and weaving that into everything you do is critical to success. We are working with one association to collect and analyze data in order to identify educational gaps and drive new products (and revenue). Data can be used to drive content and functional requirements on new website builds, improving member experience. Take a fresh look at member data to create new marketing campaign messaging aimed at increasing membership and product sales. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data helps associations turn subjective decisions into objective ones. Even when we're talking creative process and user esperience (UX), data science can play a huge role.

Stop

Stop building websites in proprietary technologies on a web developer's server. You are trapping yourself and it's completely unnecessary. Many leading associations are utilizing off-the-shelf content managements systems like Drupal or Kentico to integrate with their AMS and LMS systems, provide personalized member experiences, and track analytics and KPIs. This way, you have options when it comes to supporting your chosen system. You can select to have the original digital agency maintain and support your site, you can hire a new partner for support or you can bring support in-house. We also recommend you own the hosting relationship with a third-party provider such as Rackspace, Azure or AWS so you are never stuck not getting the service, attention to detail or strategic thinking to drive your association forward. And it's always a smoother transition when a third-party hosting provider is involved, although it's not necessary.

Continue

Continue focusing on member engagement, member value and the overall member experience. This is what we love most about associations. It doesn't matter if you're a trade association or medical society, large association or niche, everyone shares a common mission to help members become more than they can on their own. One of the most common challenges motivating associations to launch a website overhaul is to improve members' online experience and increase member engagement. And we get it—We, too, are all about the user. ■

Sandy Marsico is the CEO of Sandstorm®, a creative technology agency specializing in brand strategy, UX, Drupal and Kentico web development, and data science for associations. http://sandstormdesign.com

LinkedIn Company Page Tips: Five Reasons You Must Have One

by Greg Mischio

Debate rages over how best to use LinkedIn to benefit your association. An association speaks to many members, and LinkedIn can serve as a key tool to help get your message out and advance your mission.

Let's take a closer look at five ways your association can use a LinkeIn company page.

PEOPLE WILL ENGAGE WITH YOU IF THEY KNOW YOU, LIKE YOU AND TRUST YOU. THOSE WORDS SHOULD LIGHT THE FIRE UNDER YOU TO USE LINKEDIN TO HELP MORE PEOPLE IN YOUR INDUSTRY GET TO KNOW YOU… OPEN YOURSELF UP TO THE WORLD, AND FEEL THE LOVE (OR AT THE VERY LEAST, THE PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS) IN RETURN.

1. Boost branded search engine optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a huge component of content marketing, and while many of us focus on keywords related to products, problems and solutions, we sometimes overlook the power of the branded keyword—In other words, your association name. A LinkedIn company page can help in this arena.

Begin with optimizing your association website. But you should also be optimizing your LinkedIn company page. Why? Because it will help your association name show up in search results, likely appearing right after your own website.

The more results you can get on searches for your association name, the better. It helps crowd out the competition, who might actually show up when people are searching for *your* association. Competitor SEO folks can get sneaky that way!

2. Curate content for your team

You can post carefully crafted content on your company LinkedIn page, which staff members can then share to their personal pages with confidence.

This liberates your team, and they'll be far more likely to post on social media to push out your messaging.

3. Use it in conjunction with Facebook to tell your association's story

Many social media gurus will tell you that your association's Facebook page is a great place to share information about all the work your association does, or share photos of employees, so they can share it on their own Facebook pages.

I get that, and I think it's great. But do the same thing on your LinkedIn company page. Heck, do it more! I mean, if you're trying to attract new members or staff, why go to Facebook? We go to Facebook for cat memes, not to cultivate professional connections.

Your company LinkedIn page is a great place to showcase all your association has to offer.

4. Facilitate staff in building their personal LinkedIn profiles

Write a concise paragraph that summarizes your association, emphasizing important keywords, for your company page. Your staff members can then insert it into their personal profiles.

This is a great way to keep the message consistent, build SEO and allow your team to focus on building out the rest of their personal profiles knowing that they are using sanctioned language to describe the organization.

5. Help members, prospective members and partners know your association, like your association and trust your association

People will engage with you if they know you, like you and trust you. Those words should light the fire under you to use LinkedIn to help more people in your industry get to know you. Let people into your association's inner world. Share your association's culture with everyone. Open yourself up to the world, and feel the love (or at the very least, the professional connections) in return.

A few final tips to get the ball rolling

To really make your company pages effective, implement the following tips:

- **Define your target audience.** LinkedIn is *the* place for organizations to connect with their target audience. This needs to be clearly defined, starting with job titles and geographical locations.
- **Develop your LinkedIn strategy.** Once you have defined your target audience, develop key messages and decide how your association is going to approach LinkedIn.
- **Create your organization's social media policy.** This sounds like an *ugh*, but it's really an *a-ha*. In developing a policy, you set the boundaries for what your employees can and can't do on social media. This empowers them and can really incite their creativity.
- **Train your team.** Engaging on LinkedIn isn't going to be a one-off effort. You need to work with your team to not only build a profile, but also build their personal strategies for engaging and starting conversations.

Regardless of your approach, you have to maintain a sustained effort and develop some benchmarks for success. Otherwise, all the posting on LinkedIn will seem futile. Be sure to tie it into your website metrics, so you can show the program is working.

The ultimate question: Why the heck are we doing this?

It all comes down to that at the end of the day, right? Why are we posting stuff, and connecting with people, and sharing the events our association is organizing? Why? Because more conversations = more opportunities = more members.

So get that company page set up, set up right, and start sharing your messaging content! ■

Greg Mischio is the owner and strategic director of Winbound (www.winbound.com), a content marketing firm providing an all-in-one content marketing and conversion optimization package specifically designed for small marketing departments. Twitter: @gregmischio

Building a Professional Network When Moving to a New City

by Paul Bristow

Moving is scary. You've packed up your entire life to leave your home, friends and family, and move to a brand new city. If that weren't enough, you're faced with the daunting task of building a professional network in uncharted territory. I've moved twice post-graduation—first to Columbus, Ohio from Central Illinois. But now I call Brew City home. I've accumulated some tips and tricks along the way with a bit of help from my colleagues and friends.

REACH OUT TO YOUR ESTABLISHED NETWORK AND TELL THEM ABOUT THE EXCITING CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE. CHANCES ARE, SOMEONE HAS TIES TO YOUR NEW AREA AND IS HAPPY TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THEIR CONNECTION(S).

Do your research

Chances are, you didn't move without researching the housing market or cost of living. Why not also research the restaurants and local hot spots? Not only are these venues great places to meet locals (you never know who may be sitting next to you at the bar), you'll need something to talk about once you get yourself out there. Food and drink has the power to unite people, and I'm always willing to give restaurant recommendations to both people in my local networking chapters and strangers I meet on the street. Submerging yourself at hot spots within your immediate area will make you feel comfortable in your new city, too.

Use your colleagues (and your competitors) to your advantage

If you're lucky enough to be joining an established team, your colleagues (some of your first new friends) will likely already have a vast professional network. Ask them to bring you as a guest to a local association chapter meeting of which they're a member, or ask them to arrange a luncheon to introduce you to a counterpart at your biggest competitor. You've heard the old adage *keep your friends close, but your enemies closer*—sometimes it's easier to create a support system of people who do what you do, as they're best suited to understand your career joys and pains.

Don't lose touch with your established network

Think of it this way: Why start over with a brand new network when you can just add on to the one you already have?

Before you move, reach out to your established network and tell them about the exciting change in your life. Chances are, someone has ties to your new area and is happy to introduce you to one of their connections. Their connection will introduce you to a new connection, and that connection will introduce you to someone else. It's a snowball effect, for networking!

Look for local chapters of your current professional organizations. If you're reading this, you're likely already a member of WSAE. If you're moving out of state, join the SAE there. Are you a member of your local Toastmasters, Rotary Club or young professionals organization? Your new city may have a chapter, too.

Are you active in your college alumni association? If so, make a point to attend the closest local chapter meeting. If you aren't active, how many times in the past year has a student with the association called and pleaded for a donation? For once, answer that call, ask about local events and commit to attending a meeting.

Say yes to something crazy

I'm the first person to want to curl up with an adult beverage on the couch after work. But, if your colleague, competitor or newfound friend from your local bar asks you to do something after work, make it your new personal policy to say yes. I understand that attending a book club meeting with Susan from accounting may not be your idea of a night on the town, but what if the person sitting next to you at the coffeehouse could be your next client or member?

Do something crazy! Take up a new hobby—painting, dancing, dodgeball or something you've always wanted to try but just haven't yet. Go to that neighborhood theatre audition and make a fool of yourself, or attend Susan's book club meeting even if you haven't read the book—you never know who you might meet! If you can't find the particular activity you're interested in, create your own group (meetup.com is a great place to start).

Be patient

Moving is a brave adventure and building a new professional network may feel tedious. If it seems like you can't gain traction, be sure you have at least one positive, encouraging person in your new home city who can support you when you're feeling down. Above all, enjoy the process! ■

Paul Bristow is Sales Manager at Hyatt Regency Milwaukee, and is a WSAE member.

Chair's message, continued from page 2

At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel.
- Maya Angelo

Dream

Explore your curiosity at any age. Confidently telling yourself "you can," provides permission to move forward. Share your big ideas with those who will support and celebrate your aspirations. Listen to members' dreams, They are a treasure of information which may transform your association. We always remember those who heard us.

If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.
- Booker T. Washington

As we navigate our association and individual stories, resurrect the foundational blocks from your youth. You may be surprised how much fun it is to expand your horizons, those on your staff and of your members. Be that person in someone's corner. Build a prosperous association. You've got this! ■

Kristina Mattsen-Grimm, CAE



Meeting Spaces • Event Rooms • Guest Rooms*

Conference Packages • Great Dining Options




FLUNO | CENTER

EVERY EXPERIENCE, EVERY DETAIL, EVERY DAY

CONTACT US TODAY!

601 University Ave., Madison, WI 53715

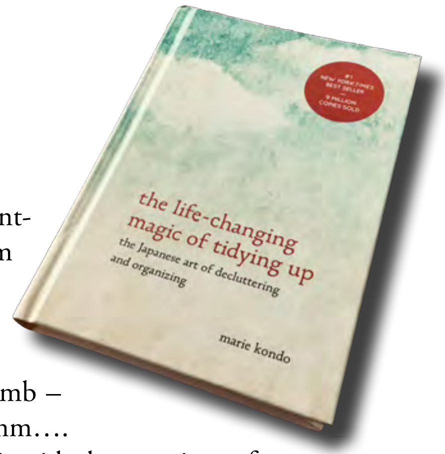
(608) 441-7117 • (877) 77-FLUNO/35866

fluno.com

*Subject to restrictions. Please call for more information.

Declutter and Get Organized

The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up, the Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing by Marie Kondo



reviewed by Denise Barnett

Full disclosure:

1. I haven't seen the Netflix show that's all the rage.
2. I've been living a minimalist lifestyle for a few years now.

The KonMari Method, as it's been coined, is the newest trend in decluttering to "dramatically transform your life." In her book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up, the Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*, Marie Kondo details the basic tenets, which include focusing on what to keep versus what to discard and living intentionally, allowing your possessions to be an expression of yourself. Kondo encourages her clients to only keep items which bring them joy and to eliminate those which have "outlived their purpose."

> KONDO RECOMMENDS *NOT* SORTING OR LABELING THESE PAPERS (LEGAL, TAXES, ETC. AS MINE PREVIOUSLY WERE)... IF SOMETHING IS NEEDED FROM THOSE PAPERS, I SHOULD GO THROUGH AND TOUCH ALL OF THEM SEARCHING FOR THE ONE DOCUMENT I'M LOOKING FOR. THIS WILL FORCE ME TO IDENTIFY IF ANY OF THE PAPERS BECOME OUT OF DATE AND CAN THUS BE DISCARDED.

So here's why the full disclosure above: I haven't witnessed the joy she reports her clients experiencing in going through this KonMari process. But I wasn't letting that stop me, so I started with "Tidying by category works like magic" and attacked my closet first, as directed. Everything came out, I touched every piece to detect if it "brought me joy" and that which did not went into a discard pile. Then, and only then, could I return my items to my closet. And the KonMari Method tells you the best way to honor your clothing through proper storage.

Here's where my challenge came in. Because I've been living a minimalist lifestyle already, all this effort resulted in two pairs of pants and three tops finding their way to the donation pile. Not exactly the bags and bags of clothing which she says her clients routinely discard. Also, I don't have shoe boxes and other empty boxes stashed around to turn into the proper storage containers to allow my socks to stand up and breathe or my tops to be filed vertically for easy viewing.

But, I'm not easily daunted, so off to the next room I went. I decided to tackle my document storage. Here's where I stumbled again. Kondo's rule of thumb – "discard everything." Hmmm….

Now she does clarify this with three sections of items to keep:

1. Papers currently in use.
2. Those needed for a limited period of time.
3. Documents which must be kept indefinitely.

Anything outside of these categories went into a "to-be-shredded" pile. The papers to be kept went into two separate vertical files. Current papers became my "needs attention" file. The rest were to be put all into one file. Kondo recommends *not* sorting or labeling these papers (legal, taxes, etc. as mine previously were). The thought process here is a common one in her method: if something is needed from those papers, I should go through and touch all of them searching for the one document I'm looking for. This will force me to identify if any of the papers become out of date and can thus be discarded.

The main themes throughout this book were to only retain items which "spark joy," not to feel wasteful by discarding those that don't and to pursue perfection. If spring cleaning is on your to-do list and you feel overwhelmed by the amount of items in your home (or office!), the KonMari Method may be the perfect place for you to start. Kondo claims her clients achieve lasting results, not only in the organization of their space, but also in improving their health, relationships and even work performance!

So, take a look around you, do the items you see *spark joy*? If your answer is not a resounding *yes*, pick up this book (or call me and I'll lend you mine) and see if the KonMari Method will change your life. ■

Denise Barnett is an Association Specialist at the International Psychogeriatric Association, with Executive Director, Inc., and is a WSAE member.

A Successful Ending

How to terminate an employee the right way

by Ann Barry Hanneman and Geoffrey S. Trotier

Terminations are difficult. Even when it's clear the employee is not a good fit for the job or organization, it's an emotional event for both the employee and employer. But with careful planning, thoughtful decision-making and clear communication, an employer can make a difficult decision easier, all while minimizing legal exposure.

Assess the termination basis.

Review the reasons for the termination. Are you satisfied the grounds are legitimate? Are you convinced there are no other available options to salvage the employment relationship? Are you convinced objective and non-discriminatory reasons prompted the reasons for the termination? If communicating the reasons for termination, are you including all reasons that you might assert if you have to defend your decision later? If subjective and arbitrary grounds are found, the decision may be open to legal challenge.

Assure consistent treatment.

As a general rule, when disciplining or terminating employees, the same circumstances warrant the same treatment. Verify that others engaging in the same or similar behavior in the past were also terminated. Consistent application is critical when defending against a discrimination claim that may allege discriminatory treatment. To safeguard against this, take a look at prior instances where the same wrongdoing or incident occurred and determine whether those comparators received the same fate. If not, carefully assess why the decision was made to terminate in this case and be able to explain the difference. If an employer is unable to explain the different treatment with a legitimate, non-discriminatory business reason, the termination decision may result in legal exposure. If the explanation provided is arguably false or not the real reason for the termination, that explanation may be viewed as a pretext for discrimination.

Examine documentation.

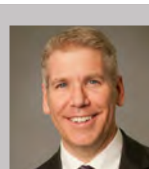
Prior to making the decision to terminate, examine all the relevant documentation. Documentation inconsistent with the facts or the reasons given for the termination can create unnecessary issues when defending a termination decision. If documentation created at the time of the termination contradicts or doesn't support the termination, the basis for the termination will seem suspicious and arbitrary. Consider an employee who is terminated for poor performance, but his file shows only highly-rated performance reviews for the duration of his employment. Based on these inconsistent documents, it may be difficult for an employer to convince a judge or jury that this employee's performance was the real problem warranting termination. To prevent this, train your managers and supervisors to provide candid and accurate feedback when giving performance evaluations to avoid sending such mixed messages.

IF A FEMALE EMPLOYEE FAILS TO FOLLOW A PROCEDURE IN JANUARY OF 2019, BUT IS NOT TERMINATED UNTIL JULY 2019 FOR THAT FAILURE, THE REASON MAY NOT HOLD UP IF THERE HAS BEEN AN INTERVENING COMPLAINT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT LODGED BY THAT EMPLOYEE IN JUNE OF 2019. IN SUCH A CASE, THE EMPLOYEE MAY BE ABLE TO PERSUASIVELY ARGUE THE TERMINATION IS IN RETALIATION.

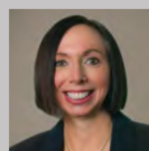
Consider the timing of the termination.

Particularly in retaliation cases, the timing of a termination can contribute to a finding of liability. As a general rule, it is advisable to discipline when the wrongdoing occurs. If there is a delay in the timing of the termination decision, a judge or jury may question its legitimacy. For example, if a female employee fails to follow a procedure in January of 2019, but is not terminated until July 2019 for that failure, the reason may not hold up if there has been an intervening complaint of sexual harassment lodged by that employee in June of 2019. In such a case, the employee may be able to persuasively argue the termination is in retaliation for the recently lodged sexual harassment complaint and not for the failure to follow a procedure the employer knew about months before. Although there has to be a causal connection between the complaint and the termination, this close proximity in time between the complaint and the termination will likely persuade a fact-finder that the January 2019 failure was not the real reason for the termination. While it is important to take the time to fully investigate misconduct before termination, employers should be mindful not to unduly delay the termination decision.

Clearly communicate the basis for the decision to terminate. Be clear about the reasons for the termination. Clearly communicating the reasons may dissuade an employee from filing a lawsuit in some cases. If no reason is provided or if the reason is not clear, an employee may think that the employer did not provide a reason because the real reason was illegal. Avoid that second-guessing by taking time to prepare the communication so there is no doubt about the reason for termination. When you've done your assessment of the reason and examined the consistent and supporting evidence, you can explain the reason for the termination with confidence. Keep in mind that the reason you provide the employee at termination may be later communicated to a lawyer, an unemployment insurance adjudicator if benefits are pursued and any other prospective employer that wants to know the reason for the separation. Consistently providing the accurate reason(s) for the termination will avoid any unnecessary uncertainty in the event the decision is later challenged. ■



Geoffrey S. Trotier is an attorney at von Briesen & Roper, S.C. Attorneys at Law, and can be contacted at gtrotier@vonbriesen.com.



Ann Barry Hanneman is an attorney at von Briesen & Roper, S.C. Attorneys at Law, and can be contacted at ahanneman@vonbriesen.com.

If your organization would like assistance in preparing for a "successful" termination or defending an employment decision, please contact either author.

HR Considerations for a Termination

by Celeste Rom, MSHR

Be prepared for emotions.

No one enjoys terminations—not the person delivering the message and certainly not the person receiving it. However, at the time of termination, it is important that the individual being terminated feel as though he/she has been treated with dignity and respect. An employee who has been let go may show sadness or exhibit defensive or angered behavior, but it is important that you, as the messenger, remain respectful and use an understanding tone. Even when you may feel as though the termination shouldn't be a surprise, as you have done your due diligence to document performance issues leading up to it, it is still difficult news for someone to hear. If an employee is argumentative, it is important not to engage, but rather redirect the conversation back to the decision that has been made and guide the interaction to a conclusion.

Provide tangible information.

Give the employee a separation packet at the time of termination that outlines his/her final paycheck(s), end of insurance coverages and COBRA information. This provides answers to some of the employee's initial questions and the information needed to move forward. If the circumstance is one in which you would not contest unemployment, let them know that. Doing so may ease the situation if the employee knows he/she has a potential means of income.

Create an environment that draws limited attention.

When possible, give the employee the option to go back to his/her desk to retrieve personal items. The employee should still be escorted by a human resources (HR) staff person to ensure only personal items are taken. However, removing immediate co-workers to a separate conference room during this process allows an employee an opportunity to get his/her personal items without facing uncomfortable questions from co-workers.

Consider timing.

Many HR professionals avoid terminating employees on Fridays. Most businesses, including medical and dental offices, unemployment offices or potential new employers operate on a Monday through Friday schedule. Providing an employee time within the business week to make doctor or dental appointments prior to losing insurance coverage, asking questions regarding the process of collecting unemployment and contacting new employers about job openings can help an employee feel as though he/she can move forward in a situation that may initially feel out of his/her control. Of course, in situations where grounds for immediate termination exist, such as theft, avoiding Fridays or other inopportune times may be unavoidable.

Be supportive.

In most cases, terminations are a result of progressive discipline and unmet expectations. At times, the employee may just not have been a good fit for the position. Regardless of the reason for the termination, losing a job can be a lot for someone to process. Always offer the employee the opportunity to contact your organization, most likely your HR department, if he/she has any additional questions. If an employee has a lot of personal items, offer to mail them or deliver them via a messenger service. Small gestures may help the employee feel supported through a difficult situation, and as though the organization cares about them as an individual more than as a former employee.

Terminations are never easy. However, taking the time to prepare, ensuring respect and dignity are maintained and offering continued support may not always be appreciated in the moment, but can leave a lasting impression of your organization's values. ■

Celeste Rom, MSHR, is Vice President of Corporate and Human Resources at Executive Director, Inc., and is a WSAE member.

WSAE Membership Roadshow

March 6 | Ingleside Hotel, Pewaukee

We had a great turn-out for our 2019 Membership Roadshow. It proved to be an excellent opportunity to learn from our peers. Thank you to everyone who was able to participate! View more pictures on the WSAE Facebook page.






Annual Sponsors

Visit Brookfield WISCONSIN

THE INGLESIDE HOTEL

Kalahari RESORTS & CONVENTIONS WISCONSIN DELLS, WI

FLUNO CENTER

greater green bay & the lakeshore

THE OSTHOFF RESORT

Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Wisconsin Dells The Waterpark Capital of the World!

BLUE HARBOR RESORT & CONFERENCE CENTER

THE RIDGE

HIGHER LOGIC social networking, collaboration, community

BWP PREMIER BEST WESTERN. Waterfront Hotel and Convention Center Oshkosh, WI

GREATER FOX CITIES APPLETON WI

OSHKOSH Wisconsin's Event City Oshkosh Convention & Visitors Bureau

WAUKESHA PEWAUKEE VISITOR BUREAU Meetings meet Success

Susan Quam earns her CAE credential

One hundred and sixty association executives recently received their Certified Association Executive (CAE) credential from the CAE Commission of ASAE, including WSAE member Susan G. Quam, CAE, Executive Vice President at the Wisconsin Restaurant Association. The Winter 2019 class of CAEs successfully completed the CAE examination administered nationwide on Dec. 7, 2018. They will be honored, along with the summer class of CAEs, during the 2019 ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition in Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 10-13. ■

NAIOP Wisconsin named Chapter of the Year; Villa named Executive of the Year

NAIOP Wisconsin was awarded Chapter of the Year by NAIOP Corporate, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association, at its annual Chapter Leadership and Legislative Retreat in Washington, DC. This was the Chapter's first time receiving this top recognition since being chartered in 2003.

NAIOP Wisconsin also received Chapter Merit Awards in membership and public policy.

In addition to the Chapter awards, NAIOP Wisconsin CEO Jim Villa, CAE, was named Executive of the Year. Villa was also elected by his association peers in 2018 to serve on the NAIOP Corporate Board of Directors as the Chapter Liaison designee. ■

Laura Kielbasa earns Certified Meeting Professional credential

Laura Kielbasa, Director of Meetings at Association Acumen, has earned the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation, granted by the Events Industry Council. Kielbasa manages the programming and logistics for the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies (FOCIS), Automotive Fleet and Leasing Association (AFLA) and International Association of Special Investigation Units (IASIU) meetings. ■

Association Acumen chosen to manage New York State Society of Physician Assistants

Association Acumen, LLC, a full-service association management company based in Menomonee Falls, has been chosen to manage the New York State Society of Physician Assistants (NYSSPA). Suzanne Fedie serves as NYSSPA's Executive Director. Fedie is experienced in association management and has worked in all areas of event and education coordination, contracts, speaker, sponsor and exhibitor management, registration, budgeting, membership, marketing and promotions. ■

Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) changes name to Destination Madison

2019 brought an exciting change as the Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) became *Destination Madison*—a name that reflects the passion, pride and spirit shared by the people who call the greater Madison area home.

The new name captures the tangible vibrancy and inherent independence found in Madison venues, events, businesses and community culture that appeals to these travelers. Destination Madison says, "seek us out and you will be amazed."

"The move to the Destination Madison name and brand better connects our city to the travelers who visit us and the residents who call the area home," remarked Deb Archer, President and CEO of Destination Madison. "Destination Madison encapsulates our welcoming, imaginative and exciting region and inspires visitors to seek out this special place." ■

AMPED Association Management welcomes Donté P. Shannon, CAE

Donté P. Shannon, CAE, has joined the AMPED team in its Washington, DC office, and will lead the Association of Equipment Management Professionals (AEMP) as its Chief Executive Officer.

"I'm excited to join the AMPED team as the CEO of AEMP. I welcome the opportunity to learn and grow from other top-notch association professionals," Shannon said.

Shannon comes to AMPED with more than 12 years of association management experience, most recently as Executive Director of the Specialty Advertising Association of California. He is also the 2018-2019 Chair-elect of the ASAE Certified Association Executive (CAE) Commission, the independent and certifying governing body of the CAE credential. Shannon's career accomplishments also include selection as a 2015 Forty Under 40® Award recipient by Association Forum of Chicagoland, and recognition as a 2011-2013 Diversity Education Leadership Program (DELP) Scholar by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE). ■

New video shows off the best of Milwaukee

VISIT Milwaukee's new video is totally random, totally wonderful and totally Milwaukee. In less than two minutes, viewers learn why Milwaukee is the ultimate meetings destination. "Milwaukee has an excellent convention package, but this video shows what you can expect in addition to the convention center like our amazing hotels, unique entertainment options, and excellent dining," said Marco Bloemendaal, senior vice president of sales for VISIT Milwaukee. "Our new video pulls viewers through the screen into our city, giving them a true picture of every wonderfully random aspect of Milwaukee that cannot be experienced anywhere else." Watch the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxURHFc3Fw8&feature=youtu.be. ■

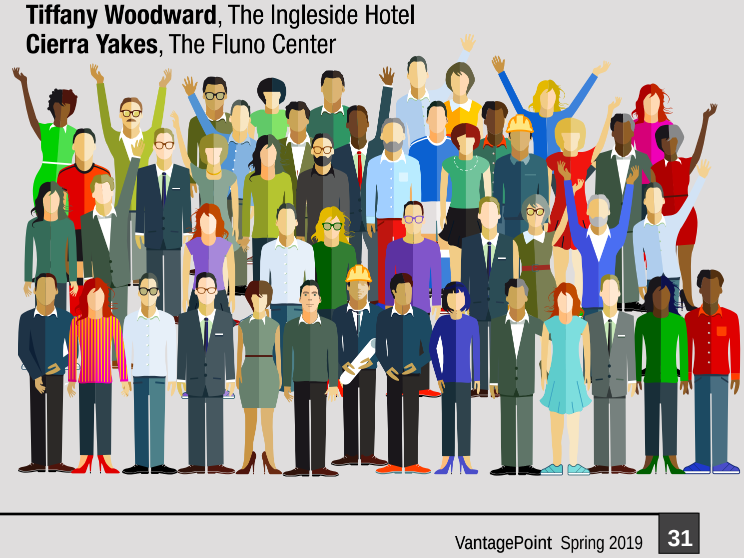
Brag a Little Bit!

Let us help spread your good news - Send your news to Kristin at kmcguine@wsae.org, and we will include it in future issues of *VantagePoint* magazine. Please note that there is no additional cost to this promotion - It is included as a benefit of your WSAE membership.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As of March 15, 2019

Steven Bailey, Junior Volleyball Association
Ann Bartlett, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry
Ally Bates, Wisconsin Bankers Association
Paul Bristow, Hyatt Regency Milwaukee
Hannah Bunting, Wisconsin Library Association
Nick Burke, Omnipress
Sona Camara, Wisconsin Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Kim Casey, Visit Brookfield
Victoria Corlett, Executive Director, Inc
Maria Anastasia Demco, The Abbey Resort
Kara Enge, Radisson Hotel Milwaukee NW
Sandy Giese, Wisconsin Bankers Association
Vanessa Goodman, Executive Director, Inc.
Susan Grigsby, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry
Jordan Haag, AMPED Association Management
Carmella Hansen, National Funeral Directors Association
Shelby Hill, Executive Director, Inc
Darcie Holte, Destination Lake Winnebago Region
Mirek Janowiak, Omnipress
William Jenkins, American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry
Sheryl Kim, NARI of Madison, Inc
Brent Kindred, Wisconsin Association of SkillsUSA, Inc.
Chrissy King, NARI of Madison, Inc
Emily Kinzel, Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association
Brenda Krainik, Greater Green Bay CVB
Erin Lehman, Junior Volleyball Association
Gail Marquardt, National Funeral Directors Association
Lori Matthews, League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Rose Oswald Poels, Wisconsin Bankers Association
Laura Otten, The Osthoff Resort
Nicole Plank, Executive Director, Inc
Joe Plasterer, Starkweather Association Services LLC
Melissa Rasmussen, Milwaukee Marriott West
Mary Rhode, Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau
Samie Riley, Junior Volleyball Association
Patty Rogers, Wisconsin Bankers Association
Kelsi Roschen, Hotel Retlaw
Melissa Sabel, Stevens Point Area CVB
Brandon Smith, North Central Group
Rheanna Smith, TEAM, Inc
Melinda Starkweather, CMP, Starkweather Association Services
Dustin Syrjanen, Executive Director, Inc
Brad Toll, Greater Green Bay CVB
Katie Wilcox, State Bar of Wisconsin
Taralinda Willis, Curate
Tiffany Woodward, The Ingleside Hotel
Cierra Yakes, The Fluno Center



Developing Connections Fuels Both Professional and Personal Growth

by Michelle Czosek, CAE

I always look forward to spring because it means the end of what has usually felt like a very long winter (I dread any temperature below 75 degrees) and that summer is just around the corner. It also means that the association year is in full swing and I get the opportunity to meet with other state SAE leaders, attend the WSAE Road Show and work with the board at our now annual WSAE Board Retreat.

At the retreat, we spent a lot of time discussing WSAE's role in helping people make connections with others they can learn from and develop relationships with. As I reflected on our conversations and flipped through our notes, I thought about what I gain from the connections I've made throughout my career in association management. With the exception of four very long months working in another industry, I've spent over 25 years doing something that I love. A major part of my career satisfaction comes from the relationships I've built—the people I work with, members I've been fortunate enough to serve, peers in other associations, suppliers to our industry, and the list goes on.

Why are these connections so important? On both a personal and professional level, such connections fuel everything we do. We share ideas, learn that we face shared challenges, lean on each other for support, celebrate successes and, if you select the right group of people, lift each other up and help each other to thrive. My passion for our industry grows every time I meet with a group of my peers, visit members or attend a client conference. I walk away from each meeting refreshed and excited about what's coming next.

Growing connections takes time, and for me, starts with getting to know and appreciate people on a personal level.

WSAE President and CEO Michelle Czosek (front right) spent time connecting with fellow executives from other SAEs in Colorado Springs, CO, earlier this Spring.

I've had two recent experiences where session leaders agreed with this sentiment, and kicked off their presentations with icebreakers that allowed us see a different side of people in the group. Lowell Aplebaum led the Association Societies Alliance in an Association Charrette session where he distributed a question to all attendees at our dinner the evening before. Each person's question was unique and leaned more toward the personal side. The next morning started with everyone introducing themselves and answering their question. The responses to the questions allowed us to see a different side of our colleagues, allowing us to appreciate them even more.

At an Association Management Company SIG meeting at Association Forum last week, we used a beach ball for an icebreaker. Questions were written all over the beach ball and we stood in a circle and tossed the ball around. Whatever question your left index finger landed on, you answered. The questions were easy. What's your favorite song? Who do you admire most? If you could choose your age forever, what age would you choose? Name one of your favorite things about someone in your family. They were quick-hit questions that allowed us a little more insight into our peers and produced shared connections. Look for this one at a future WSAE event!

In 2003, a friend gave me a book called *The Purpose Driven Life*. While the handwritten inscription in the front of the book means the most to me, there is a lesson in this wonderful book that I think of often. Rick Warren, a pastor, writes, "When life on earth is ending, people don't surround themselves with objects. What we want around us is people—people we love and have relationships with. In our final moments we all realize that relationships are what life is all about." I believe this, and encourage you to use this year to see how many true connections you can make. I promise that the time you invest will be worth it.

WSAE will give you plenty of opportunities to do this through both formal and informal events. Our calendar includes the Spring Outing, the Summit, roundtables, group webinar viewings, a holiday social and more.

I look forward to seeing you in Steven's Point for the Spring Outing where you'll have plenty of time to learn and grow your network of connections! ■

Michelle


THE
INGLESIDE
HOTEL


WISCONSIN
Fun on Tap
IN THE STEVENS POINT AREA
WSAE SPRING OUTING
Join us for a
PERFECT MIX OF
EDUCATION + FUN
JUNE 3&4, 2019
SENTRYWORLD | STEVENS POINT
Add local flavor and fun into your meetings here.
STEVENSPOINTAREA.COM