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June/July 2022

New Report Reveals Association Pros Feel Optimistic About The Future



It's been a rough two-plus years, so it would be understandable if association pros were not feeling great about the future. But a new report from McKinley Advisors, *2022 Association Viewpoint*, reveals a more positive outlook.

In fact, executives are relatively optimistic right now.

"Part of the optimism can be attributed to us returning to a new normal," said Alanna McKee, practice director at McKinley

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UPCOMING EVENTS

TUESDAY, JULY 12

AMC Summit

Omni Charlottesville

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 11
and FRIDAY, AUGUST 12**

SIG-a-Palooza
virtual

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

Seminar with Lunch
Independence Golf Club

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 and
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13**

CEO & Senior Staff Retreat
The Cavalier Virginia Beach

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5 and
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6**

Fall Conference & Expo
Hilton Richmond Downtown
and Greater Richmond
Convention Center

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Seminar with Lunch
Virginia Crossings, Tapestry
Collection by Hilton

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

**Awards Luncheon
& Silent Auction**
Hilton Richmond Hotel
& Spa at Short Pump

**LEARN MORE AT
VSAE.ORG/CALENDAR**

Register for SIG-a-Palooza



Join members for virtual gatherings of VSAE's Shared Interest Groups (SIGs) on **Thursday, August 11 and Friday, August 12**. These member-led groups are organized around areas of interest and offer a forum for you to discuss what matters most to you with fellow colleagues. Register at vsae.org/2022-sig-a-palooza for this free event. Sign up for as many as you'd like!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11

- AMC | 9:00–10:00 a.m.
- Senior Staff | 10:30–11:30 a.m.
- Communications & Marketing | 1:30–2:30 p.m.
- Government Affairs | 3:00–4:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12

- Associate Member | 9:00–10:00 a.m.
- CEO | 10:30–11:30 a.m.
- Meeting Planner | 1:30–2:30 p.m.

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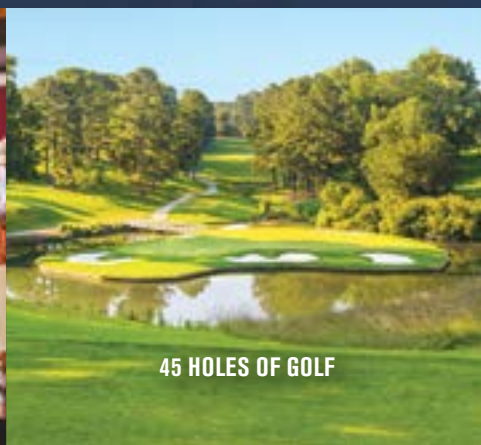
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Leadership reflections



Zach Eisenman
VSAE Dep. Executive Dir.

“Yes, I am a pirate, two hundred years too late. The cannons don’t thunder, there’s nothing to plunder I’m an over-forty victim of fate. Arriving too late, arriving too late.”

Jimmy Buffett’s classic song, *A Pirate Looks at Forty*, tells the tale of a modern-day swashbuckler approaching 40 and coming to terms with the notion that his preferred profession may not be around much longer—and pondering what that means for his future. For many young professionals both in the association industry and those industries we serve, this idea likely rings similarly true. There’s no escaping the fact that the rapid changes to the workforce are impacting us all, especially those of us who are still early in our careers.

It’s no secret we are in a period of unparalleled uncertainty, change, and disruption. Much has been written about how the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in an era of remote work and is continuing to reshape the workplace. However, far less has been written about the long-term impact of these changes. For someone 20, 30, or even 40 years away from retirement age, what does it all mean?

For starters, there is more pressure than ever on organizational leadership. The American workforce is aging. In 2011, that first round of Baby Boomers—those Americans born between 1946 and 1964—turned 65. From now until 2030, it is estimated that 10,000 Baby Boomers each day hit retirement age. What happens to an industry or association when that institutional knowledge goes away? Longtime Executive Directors/CEOs are retiring, and key volunteers and board leaders are doing the same. Developing the next generation of leadership, if not already in progress, needs to be a priority.

On the flip side of this, career trajectories have often extended, and the traditional notion of a career path has turned upside

A Young Professional Looks at Thirty

down. Not only are today’s employees looking for flexibility around where and when they work, but the pace of their entire careers has changed. Millennials and Gen Z have a much different view of their career than their older colleagues. The era of the gold watch retirement has passed. Gone are the days of a 40-year career at one organization, or

Developing the next generation of leadership, if not already in progress, needs to be a priority.

even one industry. Job mobility and flexibility continue to be priorities in the workforce, and even a 5-year tenured employee is an accomplishment these days. Accommodating learning opportunities, parental leaves, and other detours and sabbaticals will be key in attracting and retaining top talent.

I offer much of this commentary to provide some context on how many of my peers view the current state of employment. The traditional paradigms of work, training, careers, and mentorship are evolving. There is no roadmap for many of the challenges we face, and there are likely some challenges ahead that we cannot even imagine right now. It is up to us, the next generation of leadership, to embrace these challenges and uncertainties and face them head-on. We are not the first generation to have to overcome cultural shifts and market disruption—we are just the first to do it over Zoom.

ceo + senior staff retreat

september 12–13, 2022
the cavalier virginia beach

Leading With Purpose: Foresight, Agility, Innovation

From the experience of the past two years to the uncertainty ahead, what we thought we understood about our society, our organizations and our workplace has been turned upside down. Organizations and their leaders must sense these signals of disruption, understand larger patterns of change, promote strategic agility and innovation, communicate a clear and inspiring vision for navigating uncertainty, and empower and energize their workforce and volunteers.

Join fellow CEOs and Senior Staff for this year's retreat, September 12–13, at **The Cavalier Virginia Beach**. Through interactive workshops, group discussion and tabletop exercises, attendees will:

- assess the future landscape and understand how to adapt the mindset and practices of an agile organization;
- explore how to develop and communicate a shared vision and facilitate staff and volunteer participation and empowerment; and
- conduct a "personal SWOT" analysis and map opportunities to leverage their leadership.

This retreat is only open to Association CEOs, Executive Directors, Senior Staff, and event sponsors.



Content Leader

John Sarvay

Founder | Floricane, LLC

John encourages both clients and his own team to make big ideas better and good ideas bigger. He displays a unique ability to weave together seemingly disparate ideas to help groups of people see their challenges in new ways. John has more than two decades of experience in leadership and team development, facilitation, strategic planning, and communications. He has worked in academia and for Fortune 500 corporations. He founded Floricane in 2008 after a decade of leadership development, facilitation and strategic communication work for Richmond-based Luck Companies.



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Agenda

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

9:00 a.m.

Opening Remarks

9:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

**Scenario Planning for
Innovation and Agility**

12:15 – 1:15 p.m.

Networking Lunch

1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

**Taking Stock with a Human
Needs Assessment**

6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Reception

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Dinner

9:00 – 10:30 p.m.

Dessert & Cocktails

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

Breakfast

8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

**Your Personal
Leadership SWOT**

11:30 – 11:45 a.m.

**Closing Remarks & Boxed
Lunch Pick-up**



**Registration opens
soon at
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SIG-a-Palooza is a collection of small Shared Interest Group (SIG) meetings. SIGs are member-led groups organized around areas of interest. They offer a forum for peer-to-peer learning in a small group atmosphere. SIGs are a great way for association executives and other leaders to learn from colleagues about the issues relevant to them. If you've never been to a SIG meeting, now is the time to try one out. The SIG-a-Palooza is open to all.

Register at vsae.org/2022-sig-a-palooza.

ceo + senior staff retreat

september 12-13
the cavalier virginia beach

Leading With Purpose: Foresight, Agility & Innovation

This exclusive two-day event for association CEOs and other senior staff leaders is focused on equipping you to lead your association now and into the future. Educational sessions and in-depth discussions will provide insights and tools so you will walk away with new energy and innovative ways to approach your association leadership style.

Register at vsae.org/ceoretreat



This is Virginia's annual premier event for association executives, professional meeting planners, and others who are involved with holding meetings or events. Interact with representatives from meeting venues and service providers throughout the Commonwealth and beyond in the Exhibit Hall. Enjoy the insights of high-caliber content leaders on a variety of issues affecting the association industry. All while networking with your association peers!

Registration opens late July at vsae.org/fall

LET'S RECAP

Establishing Your Personal Board of Directors

June's monthly seminar, held at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Richmond, featured Dr. Holly Sullenger on "How to Create Your Own Personal Board of Directors." She discussed how most individuals and organizations do not get ahead without the help of others and how having a personal board of directors and the synergy that is present when many minds and talents come together usually propels all involved to new heights. Attendees learned about the types of individuals to include in their personal board of directors and how to construct their board for individual and organization success.

Remote Work Arrangements: Legal Considerations

June also featured the second seminar in the 2022 NOVA series. Hosted at the offices of law offices of Whiteford, Taylor, Preston, LLC, the topic was "Remote Work Arrangements: Establishing Expectations and Mitigating Risk." Jennifer Johnson and Jordan Halle, attorneys at the firm, detailed a list of measures employees should address to ensure clearly defined employee expectations and to mitigate risk to their organizations related to remote work. They also highlighted tax and employee law considerations for employees located in states outside of Virginia.



Association
Leadership
VIRGINIA

Interested in developing your leadership skills and advancing your association career?

Association Leadership Virginia (ALV) will launch its third cohort this fall! This one-of-a-kind program is focused on developing leaders for Virginia's association community. Whether you're an early career professional or a seasoned executive looking to advance your career, you'll gain valuable leadership and association management skills, build professional and personal relationships with colleagues from across Virginia, and map out a plan to achieve your individual goals, all while earning 32+ CAE credits. Six day-long, in-person sessions are held from October 2022 through May 2023.

Deadline to apply is August 15, 2022.

Visit vsae.org/alv for more information and to apply.

Fall CAE Study Group



Registration for the 2022 Fall CAE Exam Study Group opens in August. Virtual classes will begin in late September and be held Tuesdays for nine weeks.

Each of the nine sessions is led by an experienced CAE. The CAE Study Group is free to VSAE members and \$150 for non-members.

To learn more, visit vsae.org/cae-study-groups.



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Optimistic, continued from page 1 >

Advisors. “The world is starting to come back to life, and that means several good things for associations. For many, it means that in-person events are back on track. And that’s not just good for their bottom line—as events are associated with a significant revenue stream—but it’s also bringing together the association community.”

Having people gather again also plays a big part in member satisfaction.

“Much of the value proposition of associations lies in the knowledge and expertise of its members,” McKee said. “So, getting the member community back in person can be very reenergizing and do tremendous things in terms of perceived value for the organization.”

Return to Office and Future Workforce

For associations and their members, returning to the office and other workforce issues are top of mind. Many are struggling with whether they need offices at all, and if they do, how to use them best upon return.

“There’s no ready answer as it relates to return to office,” McKee said. “You need to survey your staff. You need to get a better understanding of their needs, of how they’re going to do their best work, of what it means to have an office space and what they would use an office space for.”

“...getting the member community back in person can be very reenergizing and do tremendous things in terms of perceived value for the organization.”

The high turnover caused by the Great Resignation, particularly when Baby Boomers retire and leave a gap in leadership, means associations and the sectors they serve will need to look for new solutions.

“What can associations do?” McKee said. “One: help prepare the next generation of leaders within your industry or profession. So really thinking about what it takes to be a leader within your respective industry or profession and ensuring that we’re preparing them with the competencies and skills to assume those leadership roles. Another thing that we’re seeing associations do is investing in the pipeline for that profession.”

Business Plans and Nondues Revenue

The report also noted that the pandemic has shaken the confidence of associations about their business models. When asked whether they were confident that their “current business model will effectively support the association in achieving its mission over the next three to five years,” 17 percent of executives said they were not very confident and 55 percent said they were only moderately confident.

“There are a couple things that are preventing folks from feeling really confident,” McKee said. “The first is that COVID showed us that the traditional association business model is not solvent. Most

associations were able to weather the storm, but there’s no telling what the future holds. Second is that most associations have a business plan and a strategic plan, but we don’t always see these two documents or frameworks linked.”

McKee said it will be important for associations to ensure their organizational strategy is supported by the business plan. To do this, they may need to develop business models that look very different from the past.

“A lot of the struggle that we’re seeing across associations is that [boards] or staff are nervous to take that leap,” McKee said. “Change is scary. It’s easier to stay in the status quo. The first step is assessing your risk tolerance for your board.”

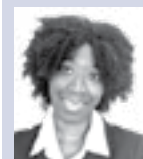
Along the same line, the report noted associations also are prioritizing diversifying nondues revenue sources. Many are turning to different markets and techniques to earn revenue.

“Typically, associations go out to their existing member or customer base and try to get additional dollars from that audience,” McKee said. “But we know that there is a limited amount that we can tap from this core audience. So, we are seeing associations starting to get more innovative in diversifying their revenue portfolio. For example, we’re seeing a lot of interest in venture capital opportunities. We’re also seeing associations exploring adjacent markets, so they’re not tapping that same pool for money.”

What is your association doing to prepare for future success?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rasheeda Childress is a senior editor at *Associations Now*. She covers money and business.

Volunteers Get Burnout Too—But You Can Help Prevent It

A mixture of offering value and emphasizing flexibility could help discourage burnout among those looking to lend a hand.

Volunteering can bring a lot of value to your association and its members.

But when there's a lot going on or the work requires more of your volunteers' time and resources than expected, it can lead to concerns about burnout. That could be a problem, especially given broader cultural trends.

A recent Gallup poll found that volunteering has been in decline, with 56 percent of respondents saying they had volunteered in 2021. By comparison, that number was 65 percent in 2013 and 64 percent in 2017. (Also complicating matters: The people who are volunteering are having to devote more of their time to it, according to research from Independent Sector.)

For associations, helping to ease the potential for volunteer burnout could be key to alleviating or even reversing the trend. With that in mind, read on for tips on how to rekindle the spark of volunteering:

Emphasize the Mission

Just as with your employees, orienting work around a mission can be an impactful way to keep volunteers engaged, as Mariama Boney, president and CEO of Achieve More LLC, noted. "The work that we do is mission-driven, purpose-driven, serving certain industries and communities," Boney said. "Recognizing the impact we make in the world is absolutely critical." Your organization can do that by maintaining a direct line between volunteers' work and the mission of the association served, and giving volunteers a voice in the discussion.

Work on Volunteer Appreciation

Making it clear to volunteers that their work is appreciated, no matter how



they help, can authentically show that your organization takes their contributions seriously. A 2021 reader roundup highlights a few examples of what this could look like, including a public note on social media, a small gift, or an event in honor of volunteers. "Every year we select a unique item to send to all of our members who volunteer with us in any capacity," said Mike Chamberlain, CEO of the Grant Professionals Association. Last year, the group gave its volunteers a mask with the association's logo on it.

Focus on Volunteers' Engagement Needs

If your association makes volunteering all about the benefits to the association, it could stifle interest from volunteers—and add to the stress of the ones who do stick around. The solution? Make it about what they can get out of it. Wesley Carr, who became a director of chapter relations for the American Inns of Court in 2021 after serving 15 years with

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The CEO Award of Excellence

The CEO Award of Excellence is the highest award VSAE can bestow upon one of its Executive members. This award is given to an outstanding chief staff executive who has been nominated by peers in recognition of his or her leadership and achievement.

The Association Staff Award of Excellence

The Association Staff Award of Excellence gives VSAE the opportunity to recognize an outstanding association staff professional for his or her contributions to their association. Criteria for this award include high integrity, professionalism, recognition from peers, a record of success and achievement in association management, and consistent leadership and service to VSAE.

The Associate Member Award of Excellence

The Associate Member Award of Excellence allows the association community to recognize those suppliers and vendors among its membership who have distinguished themselves among their peers through their leadership qualities and professionalism.

The Career Service Award

The Career Service Award is presented to an individual outside of the field of association management who through hard work, pleasing personality, and dedication to his or her job, has provided exceptional service over the years to the association community. Due to the nature of this particular award, nominations may only be submitted by Executive members.

The award nomination period opens in late July.

To learn more, go to vsae.org/awards-of-excellence.

Burnout, continued from page 9 >

the Regulatory Affairs Professionals Society, said in an interview last year that during his time with RAPS, the organization committed to changing its language so that tasks like auditing online courses weren't just emphasizing the benefits to the association. "Now we position it much more as 'because that will then ensure that we are training the profession,'" Carr noted.

Shrink the Volunteering Need Down to Size

If the time crunch is a factor behind volunteer burnout, maybe the way to discourage burnout is to make the work easier to digest. One such approach is microvolunteering, which is oriented around tasks that are small enough that people can do them on their own schedules. Some groups, such as AARP, take steps to make microvolunteering resources more approachable, so those interested in helping can do so.

Understand Volunteers' Schedules and Limitations

If you offer only a couple of options for volunteering, that raises the barrier to entry. "Consider someone who wants to start volunteering, but they have an unconventional work schedule and can't attend weekend events," Latasha Doyle wrote on the Candid blog. "Or perhaps someone has a typical 9-to-5 workweek, but they don't have enough free time to work a full volunteer shift." Beyond the aforementioned microvolunteering, you should offer flexibility in volunteer activities—because if you don't, the idea of volunteering could turn into a stressor of its own.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ernie Smith is a senior editor for *Associations Now*, a former newspaper guy, and a man who is dangerous when armed with a good pun.



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Independence Golf Club is the premiere destination in central Virginia for world class golf, effortlessly elegant events, and deliciously creative food and drink. Located just west of Richmond, Independence Golf Club sits on endless acres of natural beauty; and hidden within is so much more than just the #1 course you can play in Virginia.

The Course

Independence Golf Club is an endless treasure trove of new and exciting ways to get involved in golf and other similar games. Tom Fazio designed the whimsical layout in 2002, and constant maintenance and upgrades have created pristine scenes and entrancing golf. While the 18-hole championship course offers first class golf play, the 9-hole Par-3 course, “The Bear”, provides the same quality of play but built with kids, beginners, and pro players in mind. Accompanying the Bear course is a 9-hole disc golf course, as well as a 9-hole footgolf course.

Private Events

The Estate at Independence, the in-house event and catering operation, offers several event rooms and spaces that are equally stunning and adaptable. The modern interior coupled with the spectacular estate building provide the ideal background for infinite occasions. Megan Kidd, event director at The Estate, is one of the most experienced in Richmond, and can plan any event imaginable. From unique corporate events, to spectacular weddings, The Estate’s experienced team coordinates and executes every special day to perfection.

Food and Beverage

Tavern 19, Independence Golf Club’s restaurant, is serving up delicious and refreshing takes on American staples. The talented chefs at Tavern 19 are focused on seasonal menus that take advantage of local product, while providing something tasty for



the whole family. In addition to artisan pizzas and juicy burgers, satellite restaurant Pitt19 is smoking and serving fresh barbecue just across the parking lot. With two separate outdoor seating areas, guests enjoy any of Tavern 19’s innovative cocktails while watching the sun set over the rolling hills.

Other Amenities

Independence Golf Club is constantly expanding and innovating, creating new ideas and experiences that are usually unimaginable at a golf course. Other activities and businesses on campus continue to entertain guests of every kind. The Rockin’ at Indy summer concert series features local musical acts performing

weekly to hundreds of fans. Housed within the clubhouse is The Royal Treatment, a physical therapy and golf performance office. Nestled in the woods of the Bear course is Canopy Adventure Park, Virginia’s best ropes course and zip line adventure park. The entire team at Independence Golf Club is ready to give you an unmatched and unforgettable experience.

CONTACT

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Art and Editorial Deadline
for the June/July Issue
June 1

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AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH

Congratulations to **Whitney Meyerhoffer, CAE**, Director of Communications, State Chapter Relations and Strategic Planning with the **American Mental Health Counselors Association**, for earning her CAE designation.

Best Deal of the Year on New Memberships

Effective June 1, VSAE is offering pro-rated memberships for the remainder of 2022 at significant savings. This offer applies to association professionals and industry partners. If you have been thinking about joining, now is the time to act.

If you are already a member, encourage a colleague to join. If your organization currently has 2+ VSAE memberships, adding additional staff results in even greater savings!

Contact **Tami Guthrie** at tami@vsae.org for assistance.

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