



YOUR  
*association*  
PRESS

Special 2024 Annual Conference Issue



Welcome!



On behalf of the Team at the **Hilton Norfolk The Main**, we welcome you to the 75th Anniversary of the Virginia Society of Association Executives. It's an honor to host VSAE Members and Partners for this special occasion. We proudly welcome you to the Epicenter of Downtown Norfolk. We are certain this event will be a memorable experience as we celebrate with our friends and colleagues.

Our Team of "Main Maniacs" would like to extend a special thank you to the associations we've had the honor of hosting over the past seven years. We take pride in executing special events, galas, trade shows and meetings. Our Exchange Conference Center provides an atmosphere of learning, networking, and celebration in a contemporary and state of the art setting.

A special thank you to the teams at **VisitNorfolk** and VSAE for the collaborative and creative planning sessions that are sure to provide lasting memories. We look forward to coming together again in 25 years to celebrate VSAE's 100th anniversary!

**Doug Barger, Senior Sales Manager  
Hilton Norfolk The Main**



On behalf of **VisitNorfolk**, it is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the 75th Anniversary Convention in our vibrant city of Norfolk, Virginia. As you gather to celebrate this significant milestone, we applaud your dedication to the core values of networking, education, leadership, recognition and advocacy. Your commitment to excellence in association management is truly commendable.

We are inspired by your recent focus on building and sustaining a diverse, equitable and inclusive association. In today's world, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment is essential for success and growth. We are honored to host an organization that values diversity and strives to create a more equitable and inclusive community for all.

As you engage in educational sessions, networking opportunities and leadership discussions during the convention, we hope you find inspiration, collaboration and support from your fellow association executives. Together, we can continue to advance our collective mission and make a positive impact on our communities.

We wish you a successful and memorable 75th Anniversary Conference in Norfolk. Thank you for choosing our city as the backdrop for this special occasion. Enjoy your time in Norfolk exploring our rich history and culture and making lasting connections with your peers.

**Kurt Krause, President & CEO  
VisitNorfolk**



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# 75 Years of VSAE



On behalf of the VSAE Board of Directors, I would like to welcome you to our 2024 Annual Conference celebrating 75 years of VSAE. Since 1949, the Virginia Society of Association Executives has been the sole association in Virginia exclusively serving the Commonwealth's association community. Our society has served Virginia's association management industry by providing professional development, continuing education, and networking opportunities for our members.

As we celebrate this important industry anniversary, I hope that each of you will take this opportunity to reignite your level of engagement in our society. VSAE has so much to offer us all so long as we are willing to participate in some capacity. Whether attending lunch seminars or conferences, joining a SIG or committee or just networking to develop your professional career, there is something for everyone. Over the years, I have found that the more I contribute, the more I gain both professionally and personally with friends and contacts.

I would especially like to thank our 2024 Partners and Sponsors for their support. None of our society's success would be possible without their participation and contributions. In particular, I would like to offer my special thanks to the Hilton Norfolk, The Main and Visit Norfolk for hosting the VSAE Diamond Jubilee.

With a commitment from members to engage and from partners/sponsors to continue supporting VSAE going forward, we are ensuring that this wonderful group of professionals has a home for many, many years to come. Now, I hope you will take advantage of this special occasion to enjoy the program, see your friends, and most of all, realize how fortunate we all are to be associated with one another.

Happy 75th to all of you!

**Stewart Hinckley**  
 2023–2024 President  
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# GET READY TO Celebrate!

## Sunday, May 5

12:00–4:00 pm	Pre-conference Activities
5:15–6:00 pm	First-Time Attendee and New Member Mixer
6:00–7:30 pm	Opening Reception
7:30 pm	Dine on Your Own

## Monday, May 6

7:00–8:15 am	Breakfast
7:00–8:00 am	Association Leadership Virginia (ALV) Information Session Breakfast
8:15–9:30 am	Opening Remarks and Keynote (1.00 CEU) <b>IGNITE YOUR RESILIENCE: BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN CHAOTIC TIMES</b> Anne Bonney, CSP, <i>courtesy of PK Speakers Bureau</i>
9:45–11:00 am	Breakout Sessions (choose one) (1.25 CEU) <b>HOW AND WHY TO CREATE A VOLUNTEER LEADER LEARNING FRAMEWORK</b> – Michelle Runge, CAE <b>LEADERSHIP PEOPLE WANT TO FOLLOW</b> – Anne Bonney, CSP <b>DEMYSTIFYING DECISION MAKERS: CONNECTING YOUR ASSOCIATION TO THE RIGHT CORPORATE SPONSORS</b> – Lori Zoss Kraska, MBA, CFRE
11:15 am–12:45 pm	Luncheon and 2024–2025 Board Installation
1:00–2:15 pm	Breakout Sessions (choose one) (1.25 CEU) <b>CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE: THE SCIENCE OF MEMBERSHIP RESTRUCTURING</b> – Chris Williams, CAE <b>UNLOCKING CHANGE: MASTERING THE ART OF STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS</b> – Stephanie Peters, CAE <b>MENTORSHIP REDEFINED: GUIDING LEADERSHIP EVOLUTION THROUGH A 360 PERSPECTIVE</b> – Michael Pereira and Celia Zamora, PhD, CAE
2:30–3:30 pm	Breakout Sessions (choose one) (1.00 CEU) <b>HOW TO AMPLIFY INCLUSIVE TEAMING THROUGHOUT YOUR ASSOCIATION</b> – Kimberley Parsons <b>3 SCOOPS AND A MISSION STATEMENT</b> – Pete Zimek, CAE
3:30–4:30 pm	Shared Interest Group (SIG) Meetings (1.00 CEU)
5:30–6:15 pm	President's Reception (invitation only)
6:30–7:30 pm	Pre-Dinner Reception
7:30–9:00 pm	Dinner & Dessert
9:00–10:00 pm	After Dinner Entertainment with The DeLoreans

## Tuesday, May 7

7:30–9:00 am	Breakfast at Your Leisure
9:00–10:15 am	Closing Keynote (1.00 CEU) <b>EVERY YES BEGINS WITH A KNOW: INTEL SECRETS TO GROW YOUR ORGANIZATION</b> – Sam Richter, CSP, CPAE <i>courtesy of PK Speakers Bureau</i>
10:30–11:30 am	General Session (1.25 CEU) <b>UNLOCKING YOUR FUTURE: BOOSTING ASSOCIATIONS WITH GENERATIVE AI</b> – Sam Richter, CSP, CPAE <i>courtesy of PK Speakers Bureau</i>
11:30–11:45 am	Closing Remarks and 2025 Annual Conference Host and Venue Announcement

## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

### OPENING KEYNOTE

#### **Ignite your Resilience: Building Confidence in Chaotic Times**

Anne Bonney, CSP

Courtesy of PK Speakers Bureau

Resilience is a quality that comes standard in the human package. We are naturally able to bounce back...but that doesn't mean we're able to maintain our morale, self-esteem, and productivity in the process. If we truly want to unleash the power of our resilience, we need confidence, and this fun, interactive, and insightful keynote will help us get there. Speaker, author and change aficionado Anne Bonney will help you build it with fun stories, sticky concepts, and plenty of laughs to help you get through the chaos of the day without wanting to rip your hair out!

#### **Leadership People Want to Follow**

Anne Bonney, CSP, Courtesy of PK Speakers Bureau

You need to be savvy to lead teams in today's workplace. You've got different generations with varying levels of experience, cultural shifts, and expectations on top of never-ending change. Your best bet for success is to be the kind of leader your people WANT to follow. In this engaging (and fun!) interactive breakout, Leadership Authority Anne Bonney will ignite your leadership with skills that will heat up any team's motivation and performance, giving you results and retention.

#### **How (and Why) to Create a Volunteer Leader Learning Framework**

Michelle Runge, CAE

It's no secret that associations rely on their volunteers to support our missions, and we look to our volunteer leaders to lead the charge. How can association staff better train volunteer leaders and set them up for success? Learn how a volunteer leader learning framework can help streamline your association's orientation and training process, direct volunteer leaders to develop the skills and learning they need in their roles, and encourage them to participate and engage.

#### **Demystifying Decision Makers: Connecting Your Association to the Right Corporate Sponsors**

Lori Zoss Kraska, MBA, CFRE

As associations are looking to corporations for sponsorship opportunities, it's vital to understand the nuances of working with the various decision-makers available within a corporation who might have an interest in supporting your association. Join corporate sponsorship expert and author Lori Zoss Kraska for this highly engaging workshop as she demystifies who the decision makers are, what each decision maker is looking for from associations, and how best to engage/communicate with each decision-maker type.



#### **Unlocking Change: Mastering the Art of Strategic Conversations**

Stephanie Peters, CAE

In a rapidly evolving landscape, the ability to drive meaningful change through strategic conversations is a paramount skill. Join us in this engaging session, where you will delve into the art of designing and facilitating strategic conversations that propel change and foster consensus. Whether you're leading a team, managing stakeholders, or navigating complex decisions with your board, this session equips you with the essential tools to create impactful dialogues.

#### **Mentorship Redefined: Guiding Leadership Evolution Through a 360° Perspective**

Michael Pereira and Celia Zamora, PhD, CAE

Have you wondered how to cultivate intentional professional relationships across generational lines? While conventional mentoring approaches usually result in one-sided benefits and guidance, 360° mentoring stands out as an inclusive approach that ensures that everyone, irrespective of their rank or tenure, can share and gain valuable insights from each other. This session will explore the model, highlighting its principles and various benefits. Leveraging stories from the real-world experiences of young and seasoned professionals, the session promises not just theoretical knowledge but also actionable strategies.

#### **Choose Your Own Adventure: The Science of Membership Restructuring**

Chris Williams, CAE

"Proper preparation is key to effective execution" – it's an axiom used by countless sports coaches over the years to instill a winning mindset in their players. But what about associations? Specifically, when an association is presented with the challenge of restructuring its membership and dues structure? Join in a "choose your own adventure" session led by you, the attendees, as we embark on the membership restructuring journey. Learn about the three core elements of any restructuring and from each others' experiences in our journeys and the potential pitfalls that lie around seemingly every corner.

#### **How to Amplify Inclusive Teaming Throughout Your Association**

Kimberley Lewis Parsons

While there has been an increased push for diversity initiatives in companies, diversity in and of itself is not enough. Because of this natural yearning we all have, a more powerful endgame for organizations is to grow from diversity to inclusion, to maximize the engagement and talent of its people. Given that teams are a

*continued on page 9 >*

# The Power of Being Uncertain

Anne Bonney, CSP, Opening Keynote Speaker, Annual Conference

Life is full of uncertainty. We never know for sure what is going to happen tomorrow - whether we'll get the job we applied for, if our relationships will last, or how a major life decision will turn out. While uncertainty can cause anxiety and lean on our resilience a little harder than is comfortable, embracing it and getting comfortable with not knowing is actually good for our resilience.

Humans rush to certainty. It's a heck of a lot more comfortable to know, but so often we're wrong! If we can learn to accept and even appreciate the unknowns in life, and stop assuming we know, it frees up our mental energy to focus on being more agile and adaptive. We open ourselves to possibilities rather than casting off creative solutions because we cling to our fixed mindsets.

When we think we know, we stop questioning, searching and discovering. We act on habit, which isn't always the right response in the moment. Uncertainty invites curiosity - and curiosity is a key factor in being able to be resilient in the face of life's challenges. Curiosity is a willingness to investigate and learn. Curiosity fires up your brain to ask, "What if...?" Some of life's greatest discoveries have emerged from a spirit of not-knowing. Albert Einstein and Marie Curie thrived on questioning the status quo and embracing uncertainty, and look where that got them!

Embracing uncertainty is like a workout for our resilience muscles; the more you do it, the better you get. When we become accustomed to not having total control or the (false) security of guarantees, we learn to adapt to whatever comes our way. We can handle unpredictable situations and even failures more skillfully. Certainty makes us brittle; uncertainty keeps us agile. Cultivating a level of comfort with uncertainty builds mental toughness (resilience + confidence) so no matter what happens, we know we can deal with it.



It's humbling and it's uncomfortable. It reminds us we don't have everything all figured out - but the beauty is, *nobody* does! The real fact is that there are very real limits to what we can know for sure. Some certainty is possible and necessary, but absolute certainty is an illusion, and the more quickly we face that reality, the more quickly we can drop the resistance to change and uncertainty, and move on to productivity in the reality of NOW!

Cultivate your curiosity! Order something at a restaurant that you wouldn't typically order. Take a different route to work and ask more questions during your meetings. These little acts of unknown-exploring will invigorate the problem-solving part of your brain, amplify your connection with others, and boost your resilience so you can handle whatever unexpected challenge comes next with a little more grace!

See you in Norfolk, and we'll chat about resilience a little more!



Join Anne for her opening keynote at the Annual Conference: "Ignite Your Resilience: Building Confidence in Chaotic Times" and her breakout session, "Leadership People Want to Follow."

Courtesy of  
PK Speakers Bureau

# Unlocking Association Growth: The Power of AI-Powered Intel and Generative AI

*Sam Richter, CSP, CPAE, Closing Keynote Speaker, Annual Conference*

In the dynamic world of association management, staying ahead of the curve is essential for driving growth and success. With the landscape constantly evolving, association executives need to leverage innovative tools and strategies to navigate challenges and seize opportunities.

Enter Digital Intelligence and Generative AI – two powerful resources that are revolutionizing the way associations operate and engage with their stakeholders. By harnessing the insights provided by these cutting-edge technologies, executives can unlock new avenues for growth and achieve their organizational objectives.

## Digital Intelligence: Empowering Informed Decision-Making

At the heart of every successful association is the ability to make informed decisions based on comprehensive insights. Digital Intelligence is the practice of finding online information to ensure relevance in every communication. It equips executives with the knowledge they need to understand their members' needs, identify potential sponsors, and seize opportunities for collaboration.

From advanced search techniques to specialized tools like the Intel Engine – which all attendees at the upcoming VSAE conference will receive – executives can access a wealth of information with ease. By knowing the key decision makers, and what's important to them, associations can tailor their messages for members, sponsors, vendors, and more to drive sustainable growth.



he'll share the inside secrets on the tools you can use to take advantage of these strategies. He'll help you transform the "R" in your CRM into relevance, highlighting how this strategic approach can help associations navigate past gatekeepers and leave lasting impressions on stakeholders. By tailoring messages to address specific needs and interests, associations can foster meaningful connections and drive more engagement.

## Generative AI: Revolutionizing Communication and Engagement

In today's digital age, relevant communication is key to building strong relationships with members and sponsors. Generative AI, powered by innovative technologies like ChatGPT, offers executives a powerful tool for crafting personalized messages and engaging with their audience on a deeper level.

By leveraging the predictive capabilities of Generative AI, executives can streamline communication processes, enhance engagement, provide exceptional member service, and deliver value to all stakeholders. In sales, marketing, and operations, Generative AI has the potential to provide massive efficiencies for your association while simultaneously providing incredible member value.

## Transforming Relevance into a Strategic Advantage

At the upcoming VSAE Conference, bestselling author and Hall of Fame speaker, Sam Richter ([samrichter.com](http://samrichter.com)), will help you discover these powerful concepts, and



Join Sam for his closing keynote: "Every YES Begins with a KNOW: Intel Secrets to Grow Your Organization" and his general session, "Unlocking Your Future: Boosting Associations with Generative AI."

Courtesy of  
PK Speakers Bureau

**Session Descriptions**, continued from page 6 >

cornerstone of driving results within organizations, they can provide fertile ground to be a catalyst for adopting and practicing behaviors that are the antidote to these barriers. This session will help you understand how to can be a change agent to amplify inclusive teaming in your organization.

**3 Scoops and a Mission Statement**

*Pete Zimek, CAE*

From their funky, chunky ice cream flavors to their social impact, the iconic Ben & Jerry's ice cream brand has reimagined how organizations can make an impact on their communities. Led by Pete Zimek, a former Ben & Jerry's franchisee turned association professional, this interactive session will help to identify strategies to advance your association's mission while increasing member value.

**CLOSING KEYNOTE**

**Every YES Begins with a KNOW, Intel Secrets to Grow Your Organization**

*Sam Richter, CSP, CPAE, Courtesy of PK Speakers Bureau*

Whether it's an existing member or client, new customer, or supplier, people do business with those they like and trust. How strong can your relationships be if you understand others better? What relevant experiences can you share? How much more value could you provide? Leave this session with techniques to: gain insight into the other person's motivations; learn what's going on inside an organization so you can build more internal relationships (in case your core contact leaves) and use information to differentiate yourself from others, tailor offerings, and provide customized value in your communications and solutions.

**Unlocking Your Future: Boosting Associations with Generative AI**

*Sam Richter, CSP, CPAE, Courtesy of PK Speakers Bureau*

Discover the potential of Generative AI to revolutionize your association, communications, and career. In his dynamic presentation, you'll learn the basics of Generative AI in a jargon-free manner, uncover how embracing these technologies can give your association a competitive edge, delve into the real-time ethical considerations surrounding AI, and understand the role associations can play in shaping industry guidelines in this ever-evolving AI landscape. Attendees will receive exclusive access to Sam's cutting-edge AI resources. Whether you're an AI expert or a tech novice, this engaging, humorous, and jaw-dropping session promises to leave you energized about your AI-powered future.

**Get detailed session descriptions, learning objectives, presenter bios, connect with other attendees, and engage on social media on the official VSAE mobile app, Engagefully.**



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