



NEXT EVENT

Monthly Meeting & Breakfast Thursday, April 2, 2015

Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa at
Short Pump

Schedule

8:00 a.m.
Registration

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.
Reception

8:30 - 9:45 a.m.
Breakfast

*"I Know What Our Members Want,
Who Needs Research"*

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Seminar

*"Melting the Iceberg:
Transforming Data into Better
Decisions"*

Larry Seibert, Ph.D.

Register online at
www.vsaе.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Senior Staff SIG Meeting
Friday, March 27, 2015
VACB

Annual Conference
May 3-5, 2015
Wyndham Virginia Beach
Oceanfront

June Monthly Meeting
Friday, June 5, 2015
Four Points by Sheraton Richmond

AMC Retreat
July 27-28, 2015
The Founder's Inn & Spa

MELTING THE ICEBERG: TRANSFORMING DATA INTO BETTER DECISIONS



*Larry Seibert, Ph.D.
Founder and CEO,
Association Metrics*

Join VSAE at the Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa at Short Pump on Thursday, April 2nd for the monthly meeting and breakfast. Larry Seibert, Ph.D. of Association Metrics will be presenting on "Melting the Iceberg: Transforming Member Data into Better Decisions".

Seminar "Melting the Iceberg: Transforming Data into Better Decisions"

Associations are made up of individual members, each of whom have their own set of wants and needs that they expect to satisfy with an association membership. By determining what those needs are, and how to group them with other like-minded members, associations can provide the

benefits, programs, and experiences that satisfy the needs of its members, which in turn will increase member recruitment, member retention, member engagement, and non-dues revenue.

This session will cover the latest techniques in questionnaire design, data collection, data analysis and the presentation of findings. Attendees will be shown how to take the results and transform them into actionable plans that are measurable and manageable.

This session is designed for individuals who are responsible for strategic planning, membership or marketing. Prior knowledge of statistics is not necessary.

Register for the meeting today at
www.vsaе.org/monthlymeeting.

Read Larry's article on [page 4](#) about developing the appropriate member survey for obtaining member data to transform into better decisions for your association.

2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE: RISING TIDES OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

**Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront
Virginia Beach
May 3-5, 2015**

Mark your calendar to attend Virginia's premier conference for the association industry. Join 200 of your favorite association executives, hospitality partners and others in the industry for three days of fun, sun and education.

VSAE's Annual Conference combines top-notch education with stellar networking opportunities to ensure attendees return to their organization with useful information and a stronger connection to the association community.

This year's conference even affords attendees a chance to contribute to the conference content by giving an IGNITE presentation. IGNITE presentations are fast-paced 5-minute presentations with 20 slides that auto-advance every 15 seconds similar to the popular TED talks. Attendees are invited to submit an idea to give a presentation at www.vsaе.org/IGNITE. Topics can be funny, serious, personal or professional. Whatever the topic, it should be something that ignites a passion within you.

Check out the full schedule of events at
www.vsaе.org/annual.

(Continues on page 3)

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AND BOARD ELECTION

VSAE's Annual Business Meeting and Board Election will be held on April 2nd during the monthly meeting and breakfast at the Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa at Short Pump. The Nominating Committee, chaired by Past President Jan Morehead, CAE and the Board of Directors, nominate the following slate of officers and directors for the 2015-2016 year (May 1-April 30).

The Slate Includes:

President: Wilmer Stoneman, III, CAE, Associate Director, Government Relations, VA Farm Bureau Federation
President Elect: Barbara Homiller, MBA, CAE, Senior Vice President, Better Business Bureau Serving Central VA
Treasurer: Scot McRoberts, MPA, IOM, Executive Director, VA Council of CEOs
Secretary: Ray Mattes, III, CAE, President & CEO, Retail Alliance
Past President: Richard Johnstone, Jr., Executive Vice President, VA, MD, DE Association of Electric Cooperatives

Phyllis Errico, JD, CAE, General Counsel, VA Association of Counties;
Nancy Israel, MPA, Executive Director, American Council of Engineering Companies of VA; **Gail Phillips, CAE, Senior Vice President,** Organization Management Group were re-appointed to serve additional three year terms.

Steven Williams, Partner, Hardiman-Williams, LLC was appointed to fill the remaining year of Ray Mattes, III, CAE term.

The following directors to continue serving on the board.

Maureen Dingus, CAE, Executive Vice President, VA Society of CPAs
Courtney Fleming, Vice President, Education & Training/Communications, VA Bankers Association
Ray LaMura, President, VA Cable Telecommunications Association
Duront "D" Walton, Jr., CAE, Executive Director, VA Telecommunications Industry Association

Additional candidates for the offices to be filled (except President and Past President) may be placed on the ballot with a petition signed by at least 10 percent of the members eligible to vote. The petition shall be filed with the Secretary at least one week before the election. The Secretary shall send notice of such additional nominations to all members eligible to vote before the election.

VOTE on the VSAE 2015-2016 Slate of officers and directors on April 2nd at the monthly meeting and breakfast at the Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa at Short Pump.

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MAY 3-5, 2015

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2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE - RISING TIDES OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Here's a sneak peak at the education featured at this year's conference. Visit www.vsaе.org/annual for more information.



Keynote: Bambi vs. Godzilla: Dealing with Difficult People
Bruce Christopher,
Psychologist and Humorist
 Difficult people are everywhere. They can be customers, co-workers

bosses, neighbors and even spouses. This program humorously reveals the six basic difficult personality styles that are out to drain you and your organization of vital energy. You will learn what they do, why they do it and what you can do about it. You will learn how to stay empowered in the face of negative, reactive, and draining people - and laugh while they do it.

Breakout Sessions:

The Psychology of Success: Secrets the Superstars Know
Bruce Christopher, *Psychologist and Humorist*

What do the superstars of success know that the rest of us do not? In this fast paced seminar, you will learn the six essential key ingredients to the science behind success. Why do some people just seem to rise to the top in their field? Why is it that some people have all the luck? You will learn how your E.Q. is more important than your I.Q. and how your attitude is more important than your latitude. This session will be extremely entertaining and interactive.



Content Marketing & Social Media
Scott Oser, *President, Scott Oser Associates;*
John Chen, *CAE, Communications & Marketing Manager, National Association for Law Placement*



Content marketing, as a way to reach your audience, shows no signs of slowing down in 2015. Rather than using traditional methods of outbound marketing, associations are now using content marketing to attract customers and potential members. But how do associations effectively develop content and ensure the right messages are delivered to the right audiences? Join us at this session to see how you can develop a content marketing strategy through unique and targeted content, and then learn how to distribute this content through different social media channels.



5 Common People Management Mistakes & How Not to Make Them
Claudia St. John,
President, Affinity HR Group, LLC

Managing people is never easy. This session will address the avoidable mistakes that many business owners make when hiring, managing and disciplining employees. Come to learn or come with a management challenge of your own, and this session will help you address it.

Lobbying Best Practices: Panel Discussion

Phyllis Errico, *CAE, General Counsel, VA Association of Counties;*
Mike O'Connor, *CAE, President & CEO, VA Petroleum, Convenience & Grocery Association;*
Mark Singer, *President, Advocates of Virginia;*
Emily Walker, *CAE, Government Affairs Director, VA Society of CPAs*

At this session you will learn from colleagues about the best practices in lobbying and legislative advocacy. What are the best ways to monitor legislation? How do you build relationships with legislators? How do you build a successful grassroots coalition? How do you maintain an effective advocacy campaign year-round? Get the answers to these questions and more in this interactive discussion with some of VSAE's best lobbyist members.



Closing Keynote: Let's Talk Strategy: Learning the Strategy Language
Tara Rethore, *CEO, M. Beacon Enterprises, LLC*

Practical planning is more than just knowing the jargon. It's knowing how to put strategic thinking into action. During this session, we will focus on a few critical basics to build your confidence about thinking and acting "strategically." Using examples from real-life situations, this session will explore how to use the vocabulary of strategy development and execution to make more strategic choices and avoid the traps that bring execution to a grinding halt.

FEBRUARY MEETING EVALUATION PRIZE WINNER

Congratulations to Matthew Stanley, Vice President, Government & Association Relations at Elwood Consulting, LLC, who was the February Meeting Evaluation Prize Winner.

His prize is an overnight weekend stay with breakfast for two at the Omni Richmond Hotel.

Don't miss out! Submit your evaluation when received by email.

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MEMBER SURVEYS: GETTING BACK TO BASICS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Larry Seibert, Ph.D. is the founder and CEO of Association Metrics, a research and consulting firm that specializes in conducting research for individual membership associations and trade

associations. Larry has 20 years experience in industry and association consulting and has recently retired from teaching marketing for 20 years.

For more information, write him at larry@associationmetrics.com.

Over the years of presenting research workshops to association executives, the same basic questions seem to be raised in almost every workshop. This article provides answers to those commonly asked questions.

What size sample do I need?

Researchers will draw a sample, instead of contacting each member of the population, when they want to save time and/or money. When using an online survey, we recommend contacting the entire population, since the time and money involved are the same for the entire membership as it is for a sample. Surveying all members gives everyone the opportunity to offer their opinions, exposes all members to the marketing effects of the survey, and produces more completed

surveys. When you contact all members you eliminate sampling bias and eliminate the need to oversample small segments of your membership.

If you are collecting data via telephone and you have no experience from previous telephone studies, start with an estimated response rate of 50 percent. If you are planning a mail survey, use an estimated response rate of 10 percent.

How many completed surveys do I need for statistical significance?

The confidence level that is typically used in social science research is 95 percent. A level of precision of +/- 5 percent at 95 percent confidence can be achieved with 383 responses, if you have 100,000 members or more. Smaller associations would need fewer completed surveys to achieve the same level of precision (example: 357 completed surveys are needed for an association with 5,000 members).

How long can my survey be?

Survey length is critical, because the longer the survey, the more likely it is that respondent fatigue will set in, resulting in less thought being put into questions later in the survey, and increasing the likelihood that respondents will abandon the survey. A rule of thumb is that it should take no

longer to complete a survey than it takes to drink a cup of coffee. Ideally, surveys should be able to be completed in ten minutes or less. This applies to paper surveys as well as online surveys.

Telephone surveys can generally be a little longer because of the ability of the interviewer to engage the respondent.

You can increase the completion rate on longer surveys by using questions that require less mental processing. It is easier for a respondent to choose an alternative from a close ended question than to provide a written response to an open ended question. If you are asking questions about numerical amounts (i.e. income), allow respondents to select from ranges of numbers rather than requiring them to provide an exact amount.

When analyzing responses by demographic characteristic, 30 respondents per segment are recommended.

When faced with a long survey, eliminate questions that do not specifically address the objectives of the study. Resist the temptation to ask questions that would be "nice to know."

For online surveys, respondents will be more willing to complete a longer survey if there is a progress meter on each page that allows them to estimate how much more time it will take to complete the survey.

How can I shorten the survey without sacrificing information?

You can eliminate some of the demographic questions in the survey if you can retrieve this information from the respondent's membership records. By capturing the respondent's member identification number or some other identifier (i.e. email address) in the survey, you can append information from your internal database to members' survey responses.

In some cases, questions can be combined. For example, instead of asking respondents if they have ever attended the Annual Convention (yes/no), and then follow up an affirmative response with a question regarding when they last attended, simply ask respondents when they last attended the Annual Convention and include the alternative "Have never attended".

Survey questions should not be combined if two separate factors are being rated. For

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MEMBER SURVEYS: GETTING BACK TO BASICS - *CONTINUED*

example, do not ask members to rate the feature on your association website that allows members to register and pay for events online. Registering and paying are two different factors and members may want to rate these two factors differently. In general, if a survey question contains the word “and” it is probably combining two separate factors and the question needs to be broken into separate questions.

Should I offer an incentive, and if so, what kind?

We recommend using an incentive in order to generate a higher response rate. This helps to ensure the representativeness of the survey participants, the larger number of completed surveys provides for a higher level of statistical precision and more completed surveys enable more segmentation analyses.

Some researchers prefer to give a small incentive to every participant. We have found that a sweepstakes drawing of three to five larger prizes provides more of an incentive, limits the financial liability to only those items, provides for more manageable fulfillment, and is less likely to encourage individuals to repeat the survey in order to get multiple incentives.

The incentives can be cash based (i.e. \$100 gift card), merchandise based (iPad), or association based (free annual membership renewal). The key to any incentive is that it has to have sufficient value to the member to encourage participation, without breaking the bank. We recommend the cash based incentive, as some individuals will likely already have the merchandise being offered and some members have their memberships reimbursed.

Does the order in which the questions are presented in the survey make a difference?

As you arrange your questions, think of a funnel – wide at the top and tapering to a narrow spout at the bottom. Your survey should start with general questions and then get more specific as the survey progresses. Keep in mind that any information revealed in early questions will influence the respondents’ frame of mind for later questions. Asking members to rate the value of their membership early in the survey will produce different results than asking them to rate the value of their membership after they have been asked to rate the association’s member benefits, advocacy efforts, meetings, educational programs and website. We prefer to ask

members to rate the value of their membership early in the survey for a top-of-the-mind unbiased opinion.

We also recommend that overall rating questions be asked before detailed rating questions. Therefore, ask members to rate educational programs overall before asking them to rate your specific educational programs, overall website before details of the website, and so on.

The questions that are more personal in nature, such as demographic questions, should be placed at the end of the survey. Respondents are less likely to abandon a survey when faced with personal questions once they have invested several minutes in taking the survey. Only the demographic questions that are used as qualifiers for skip patterns should be used early in the survey.

We use different scales for our questions. Do the scales matter much?

Researchers who studied scales concluded that the optimal number of scale points is five to seven. A scale with five data points provides sufficient discrimination for statistical analyses and seven data points is typically the most that individuals can process.

Researchers concluded that participants who are presented with a ten point scale tend to use the lower part of the scale if they are somewhat pessimistic by nature and focus on the upper end of the scale if they are generally more optimistic.

While a seven point numeric scale (1 – 7) may be simple to administer, the underlying problem with any numeric scale is that respondents are free to define each data point, (i.e. the respondent decides what constitutes a rating of five, compared to a rating of six.) Researchers have found that labeled scales (i.e. excellent, very good, good, fair, poor) provide more reliability than numeric scales and are more consistently interpreted.

What is the purpose of asking demographic questions?

The demographic information of each respondent needs to be collected for two reasons. First, demographic information allows for segmentation analyses of responses. In addition to understanding how all participants as a group responded to a particular question, it is also valuable to know where there are significant differences by member segments (i.e. type of member, age, gender, geographic region, certifications held, professional specializations, and so on.)

Second, by comparing the demographic characteristics of the respondents to the demographic characteristics of your entire member population, you can determine the representativeness of the survey participants and determine if weights need to be applied, and how to apply them. Weights are used by researchers to ensure that results are not influenced by underrepresented or overrepresented segments of the membership.

(continued on page 6)

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Roanoke

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Richmond

Grace Wilson
Richmond Marriott
West
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UPCOMING COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENTS

Habitat for Humanity Day
Thursday, May 14, 2015

Hanover Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity Day
Friday, May 15, 2015

Hanover Habitat for Humanity

FeedMore Community Kitchen
Friday, July 31, 2015

FeedMore/Community Kitchen

MEMBER SURVEYS - *CONTINUED*

(continued from page 5)

What is wrong with presenting research results as averages?

An average is an appropriate statistic for questions regarding amounts (i.e. income, length of membership, time spent on website, and so on.) Presenting the results of attitudinal questions as averages is misleading. If one member rates an educational session as excellent, and another member rates the session as poor, the average would show that you have two members who rated the session as average, which is not the case. Remember that when using averages, high responses and low responses offset each other.

A better statistic for presenting attitudes and opinions is the Top 2 rating. This simple statistic uses a five point labeled scale (i.e. excellent, very good, good, fair, poor) and presents the cumulative percentage of those who gave an excellent or very good rating. Conceptually, this can be thought of as the percentage of members who gave a grade of A or B.

If you would like answers to your research questions, or would like complimentary copies of the author's research papers, visit www.associationmetrics.com.

Be sure to join Dr. Larry Seibert on Thursday, April 2nd for the VSAE Monthly Meeting & Breakfast titled **Melting the Iceberg: Transforming Data into Better Decisions.** *(see page 1 for details)*

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PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG HOTELS

Colonial Williamsburg's New Culinary and Spirits Options add Sizzle to Meetings

Meetings have been integral to the American heritage since Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Patrick Henry and other ousted members of the House of Burgesses debated independence from King George in the Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg. Indeed, the nation's oldest academic honor society – Phi Beta Kappa – was founded by five College of William and Mary students who held their first meeting in that same Apollo Room, December 5, 1776. Important meetings have been taking place in Williamsburg ever since.



and small bites to share. An outdoor bar and full-service garden dining overlooks the historic buildings and activities taking place on Market Square in the

Revolutionary City. When night falls, outdoor fire pits extend the tavern experience well past dark.

Another venue receiving rave reviews is the Taste Studio, located in a light, airy new location steps from the Williamsburg Inn and Williamsburg Lodge. Open less than one year, this new demo kitchen allows guests to experience various culinary and spirits programs in an intimate setting with Colonial Williamsburg's top chefs. "A Chef's

Garden Tour and Tasting" program takes guests on a quick tour of historic vegetable gardens where the chefs have been growing, tending, weeding and harvesting vegetables and herbs in gardens that date back to the time of Thomas Jefferson. Following the tour, guests return to observe as the chefs prepare recipes using items they have grown in the gardens. Among the flavors guests have tasted are tomato and purple basil relish, carrot almond soup, arugula

and citrus vinaigrette, red velvet beet cake, and corn ice cream.

For mixology aficionados, chefs from the Williamsburg Inn have created "Sips with Chefs," a program held in the Taste Studio the second Friday of every month at 5:30 p.m. Executive Chef Travis Brust and Chef Scott Watson have selected varieties of spirits and accompany the sips with intriguing food pairings. Delights from bourbon and chocolate to unusual holiday cocktails make up the schedule. Chocolate continues to delight people of all ages, and the Taste Studio programming offers "Hands-on with American Heritage Chocolate," which allows participants to create their own chocolate bark. New this year is "Garden Truffle Treats," which pairs the dark, deep mysterious flavor of chocolate with fresh flavors from the garden, as guests form rich, delectable truffles in a hands-on lesson with Pastry Chef Rodney Diehl.

A schedule of programs for the Taste Studio is available at <http://bit.ly/CWTasteStudio>.

Conference services staff can also create unique private events in the Taste Studio to meet specific group needs.

Information about booking a meeting and adding unique culinary elements is available by calling Tom Spong or Matt Polansky at **757-220-7600**.

Today, Colonial Williamsburg provides 21st Century conference settings to serve the distinct needs of every group, from intimate to expansive, luxurious to economical and formal to casual. With 1,057 hotel rooms, 72,500 square feet of indoor meeting space and nearly limitless outdoor gardens, terraces, patios and lawns suitable for receptions and gatherings, meeting planners have more than 105,000 square feet of space to choose from.

New this year are culinary offerings that are sure to add sizzle to conferences that may have met in Williamsburg in the past but have never experienced all the destination has to offer.

Chowning's Tavern is a full-time ale house open continuously from 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., for all-day dining or relaxing with a cold craft beer. No reservations are required for this historic tavern. Alewerks Brewing Company, located in Williamsburg, has created three exclusive beers for Colonial Williamsburg, with the help of Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Foodways staff, who researched recipes for beers brewed in the 18th Century. In addition to these signature beers, Chowning's is focused on craft beers from various sources, in addition to wines and cocktails. The menu is light and innovative, with trenchers, soups, salads



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AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH



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Being the only hotel in the state to achieve this honor, **Wyndham Virginia Crossings Hotel & Conference Center** has, for the third straight year, been recognized as one of the Best Places to Work in Virginia.

MUSSELMAN WELCOMES NEW SON

Tim Musselman and his wife Kerri are excited to announce the birth of their first son, Calum Scott Musselman, born on February 4th at 9:16 p.m.

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

BATTLES JOINS CROWNE PLAZA RICHMOND DOWNTOWN

The Crowne Plaza Richmond Downtown has hired **Lorna Battles** as Director of Sales. Battles was previously at Four Points by Sheraton Richmond.

WALKER JOINS THE BOAR'S HEAD AS DIRECTOR OF SALES AND MARKETING

The Boar's Head has hired **Ann Walker** as Director of Sales and Marketing. Walker was previously at Primland. She brings over 30 years experience in the hospitality field with her to The Boar's Head.

2015-2016 CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

VSAE's Committees are a great way to get more involved with VSAE and give back to your industry. The committees are instrumental in important activities like planning the educational content for meetings, recruiting new members, and marketing events like the Annual Conference and Educational Symposium & Expo. It's also a great way to network and meet other members with similar interests.

The following Committees will be seeking volunteers to begin one year terms on May 1st.

Annual Conference, CAE, Community Service, Education, Expo, Government Affairs, Membership, Silent Auction

Full descriptions of each committee can be found at the survey link below.

If you are interested in volunteering to serve, go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/VSAE_Volunteer and complete the Committee Enrollment Form. The deadline for completing this form is Friday, March 27th.

If you have any questions, please call Brandon Robinson at 804-249-2234 or write him at brandon@vsaee.org.



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HEALTH CARE CORNER

Aetna acquired Coventry in 2013. Since then each carrier has operated on a quasi-independent basis. Effective July 1st, Aetna will begin to transition Coventry's group and individual policyholders to Aetna's platform of coverages, as well as their provider networks.



Questions? Contact:
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