

# REALTOR® RAE

NAR.REALTOR/RAE



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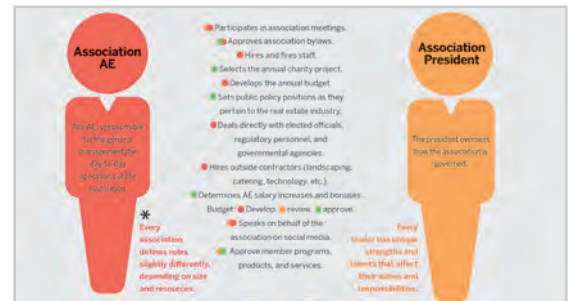
Heather Wiedrich, RCE, Hometown Association of REALTORS®, Ill.

## feature

# Leading Volunteer Leaders

How member volunteers can become better leaders with your help.

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## AE voices

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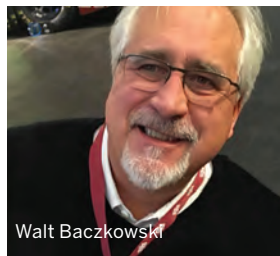
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### PROFILE

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CEO of the San Francisco Association of REALTORS® on the three essential pieces of a successful association.

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Walt Baczkowski

## online

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Read past issues in text and PDF format and access online exclusives.

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## news

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The REALTOR® AE editorial board reviews each issue and provides critical feedback, proposes story ideas, and stays in touch with fellow AEs nationwide to scout out new programs and products to share with the AE

community. To join the editorial board, write an article, or contribute information, email Carolyn Schwaar, editor, REALTOR® AE magazine, [cschwaar@realtors.org](mailto:cschwaar@realtors.org).



# What Makes a Great Leader?



**Rebecca Grossman, RCE, GREEN, CEO, Scottsdale Area Association of REALTORS®, Ariz.**

“Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood. As we do so, we will find our path of authentic service in the world.”

—Parker J. Palmer, author and activist

The theme of our REALTOR® AE summer issue could not be better timed. Preparing volunteer leaders is such an important part of what we do. Coming off the Washington, D.C., legislative meetings, I have been thinking a lot about 2018 NAR President Elizabeth Mendenhall and to whom she looked for leadership inspiration along the way. There was her father, of course, 2001 NAR President Richard Mendenhall, himself a shining example of leadership. But when Elizabeth took the stage and received a standing ovation without even uttering a word, I think we all realized that her leadership also comes from within. Her leadership is authentic. She has an uncanny ability to connect and inspire others. But my guess is that along the way, like many of us, she had many others who saw her potential and helped her realize it.

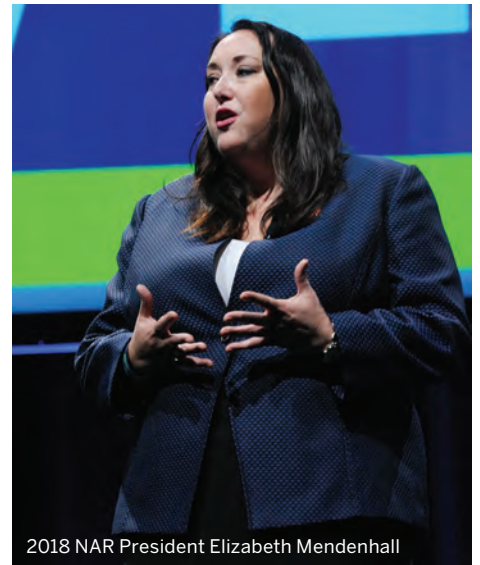
So, what are we doing locally to make sure that our future leaders are getting the proper care and feeding necessary for their standing ovation? Well, for a start, take advantage of the information shared in this issue of REALTOR® AE and continue to do

what we always do: Learn from one another. In addition, it is important to recognize that you, yourself, are a leader. I know this sounds like I am stating the obvious. However, I often run into fellow AEs who I know to be leaders but they sell themselves short. They are full of great ideas and know how to inspire others, but they think their job is to be in the shadows and not share their experience and insights. Maybe they are afraid of failure or of having their contributions discounted. Well, if failure and discounting aren't happening occasionally, then to me that means you aren't leading—you're just going along for the ride. Put yourself out there and be present.

Finally, I would ask what you are doing today to make sure your president elect is ready to lead next year. My president this year, Becca Linnig, has been a wonderful leader. She's not afraid of risk or failure, she's inclusive, and she's great at the podium. I was complimenting her recently and she turned it around to one of the best compliments an AE can receive. She said, “You prepared me for this. I was ready.” Now, I know that with Becca, I had good material to work

with from the beginning. Yet I am going to let that compliment marinate awhile because it gives me a bar to set for all my future leaders. If they are prepared, everyone wins, and the members will see their leadership and want to become leaders.

Make that connection with your leaders, be inspirational, be authentic, and give yourself a standing ovation. Enjoy this issue and have a wonderful summer.



2018 NAR President Elizabeth Mendenhall



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# Fair Housing Events Ramp Up Nationwide

Commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act continue nationwide at local and state REALTOR® associations with a wide variety of events.

The REALTORS® Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh partnered with the city of Pittsburgh and its Housing Authority in April to cohost a panel discussion about fair housing. A capacity crowd was on hand for the event, which featured the association President David Dean, city officials, and representatives of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Urban League of Pittsburgh.

Before the panel discussion kicked off, a short press conference introduced a new comprehensive fair housing package that the mayor and city will use to address fair housing in the future. Dean was among the members of the mayor-appointed task force that developed the program.

Like many REALTOR® associations, the New York Association of REALTORS®, dedicated the entire edition of its April magazine to fair housing issues, not only to remind REALTORS® that it was Fair Housing month but to educate on the relevant state laws that protect residents from housing discrimination.

The magazine is filled with editorials written by REALTOR® fair

housing partner organizations including the Asian Real Estate Association of America, National Association of Gay and Lesbian Real Estate Professionals, National Association of Real Estate Brokers, and National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals. These authors focused on the history of the Fair Housing Act from 1968 to today and offered their thoughts for the future. The association also created nine unique videos featuring members of their association talking about the importance of fair housing in New York.



▲ A member of the New York Association of REALTORS®, Karissa DeLee, poses for a photo in front of a banner featuring the cover of the association's fair housing-themed magazine.

Read more about fair housing events going on nationwide and post your association's event for others to read at [homeownershipmatters.realtor/fair-housing-stories](http://homeownershipmatters.realtor/fair-housing-stories).

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## Associations Promote U.S. Real Estate Opportunities Abroad

Thirteen state and local REALTOR® associations took part in the March 2018 NAR-USA Pavilion at the premier commercial real estate event, MIPIM (Le marché international des professionnels de l'immobilier) in Cannes, France. The post-event survey indicates that members made valuable connections (seven on average) that are leading to real business for members and communities.

For example, The Quarters, an innovative new coliving building in downtown Chicago, is a tangible result of a commercial member who met German developers at MIPIM and was chosen as the broker to help purchase and repurpose the building. But that hasn't been the only success story. An Iowa member met his international client face to face and inked a \$50 million contract in 2018. San Diego officials made a connection leading to a \$240 million foreign investment in their new port project.

Because offers are made and deals are inked at MIPIM, members of the Missouri Association of REALTORS® were in a position to instantly provide listing options to a Japanese investor looking for a large land tract for cattle

ranching in the Midwest. Association President Nate Johnson and CEO John Sebree, RCE, knew which members had expertise in this area and contacted them from Cannes. Right away, several listings were emailed for review. Will it result in a transaction? International business often takes time, yet the opportunity to make something happen was possible because they were at MIPIM, making important personal connections.

Now is the time to plan for attending MIPIM 2019. Developing a strategy long before you go will pay off. For example, know what types of industry, business, and development your region wants to attract; involve your local or state economic developers; have a policy on how

to handle business leads; promote your involvement; and encourage members to attend. For more on MIPIM, watch the 2018 NAR MIPIM video at [nar.realtor/MIPIM](http://nar.realtor/MIPIM) or contact Jan Hope, NAR's vice president of commercial and global services, [jhope@realtors.org](mailto:jhope@realtors.org).



◀ Andrea Bushnell, RCE, CEO of the North Carolina Association of REALTORS®, speaking with commercial real estate investors in France.



Avoid parking in driveways

▲ The Atlanta REALTORS® Association used its 2017 REALTORS® Safety Reimbursement Grant to fund six 5-minute safety videos.

## Associations Advocate for Member Safety with NAR Grants

Four REALTOR® associations were selected from 50 applications to receive grant funds from the National Association of REALTORS® to promote member safety. The **Greater Albuquerque Association of REALTORS®** will use its \$2,500 grant to fund several safety initiatives including classes, a member forum, a safety series in its weekly newsletter, and a series of safety videos, which will be available on its consumer-facing website. The **Greater Providence Board of REALTORS®**, partnering with the **Northern Rhode Island Board of REALTORS®** and the **Rhode Island Commercial and Appraisal Board of REALTORS®**, will create a three-phase personal safety, fire safety, and first aid program taught by local law and fire department officers. The **Prescott Area Association of REALTORS®**, Ariz., will hold a safety fair in September featuring safety training and information and a presentation by the local sheriff's department to help members develop a safety plan using best practices. The **Southland Regional Association of REALTORS®**, Calif., will offer members active shooter response training, which includes how to respond to a workplace violence situation and how to create an emergency action plan. The NAR Safety Reimbursement Grant program accepts applications annually. Visit [nar.realtor](http://nar.realtor) and search for "safety grant."

## Fact-Based Research on a Fear-Based Topic

The presence of affordable housing in Wake County, N.C., does not affect surrounding property values, a new **Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS®** study found. "As Wake County communities look to house an increasing number of neighbors, it is important that we separate fact from fiction regarding housing issues and focus on real solutions," says association CEO Tessa Hultz, RCE, CAE.

The commissioned study identified Habitat for Humanity–built homes as a representative sample of affordable housing and compared property pricing in subdivisions with a significant percentage of affordable housing to subdivisions without any. The study found that pricing metrics did not consistently favor either group, and that subdivisions containing a sizeable number of Habitat for Humanity homes continue to draw for-profit builders. For details, contact Casey R. Angel, [caseya@rrar.com](mailto:caseya@rrar.com).



A Habitat for Humanity home in Wake County, N.C.

PHOTO CREDIT: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY EDMONTON

**T**he **Greater South Bend-Mishawaka Association of REALTORS®**, Ind., raised \$200,000 to support Habitat for Humanity's 2018 Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project, which plans to build 20 houses in Mishawaka in a single week, Aug. 26-31. Dozens of REALTOR® volunteers have already begun work constructing the walls that will be used in the construction. Over five days, future homeowners will work alongside President and Mrs. Carter and hundreds of other volunteers from Indiana and around the world.

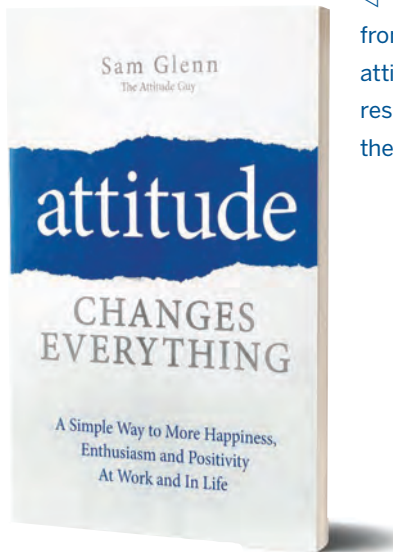


## REALTOR® Victory Over Property Transfer Tax

When Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe introduced a budget bill to secure funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority that included a 10-cent increase in the local real estate transfer tax, known as the grantor's tax, local REALTOR® associations fought back. The **Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS®** leadership scheduled the first of several meetings with their counterparts in the **Dulles Area Association of REALTORS®** and the **REALTOR®**

**Association of Prince William**. After much consideration, the joint position of the associations was that although REALTORS® are supportive of strengthening and improving the Metro, which is a vital component to the economic success of the area, the goal was to eliminate, or at least reduce, the proposed increase of grantor's tax. By staying engaged with elected officials, REALTORS® negotiated the tax increase in half; however, the final bill did not include any grantor's tax increase.





## Want to be a better leader, change your attitude

Reader: John Sebree, RCE, CEO, Missouri Association of REALTORS®

I'm confident that most people around me would say I maintain a positive attitude. So when our Region 9 conference speaker, Sam Glenn, handed me a signed copy of his latest book, *Attitude Changes Everything: A Simple Way to More Happiness, Enthusiasm and Positivity at Work and in Life*, I didn't think it applied to me. I gave it a read, anyway.

This book turned out to be just the recharge in attitude I needed. Sam's book reminded me that each day I determine whether my attitude is going to be "in my way" or if I'm going to make it work for me. This is not easy, and wishing it does not make it happen. Working my attitude requires me to determine what I can control when everything can seem out of control. Yet, despite all the obstacles we face as association executives, we are in control of a majority of what's around us, including our attitude.

This book is an easy read that I'll keep on my shelf and reread when I need an attitude boost. It also makes a great gift for elected leadership.

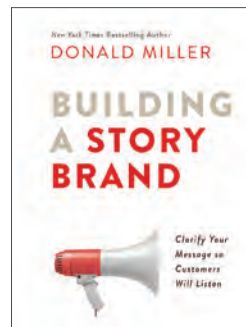
◁ "A positive attitude doesn't stop adversity from knocking at the door. However, a better attitude gives us mental clarity, creativity and resilience to deal with life's curve balls, learn from them, grow from them and move on from them."

— Sam Glenn, *Attitude Changes Everything*

## Engage members with your association's story

Reader: Chip Ahlswede, RCE, CEO, Beverly Hills/Greater Los Angeles Association of REALTORS®

If your association is like mine, it is also struggling with low member volunteerism, attendance, participation, and investment. Recently I've been looking for solutions and diving into new ways to communicate that may motivate members to actually engage.



The first book I read on the subject, *Brief: Make a Bigger Impact by Saying Less*, by Joseph McCormack, focuses on using brevity and other techniques

to create more compelling communications. If members are not showing up because they didn't get the invitation, the techniques in this book can help you create messages (videos, infographics, and posts) that they will actually pay attention to.

The second book I read, *Building a Story-Brand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen* by Donald Miller, showed me how

△ "All great stories are about survival—either physical, emotional, relational, or spiritual. A story about anything else won't work to captivate an audience. Nobody's interested. This means that if we position our products and services as anything but an aid in helping people survive...good luck selling anything to anybody."

— Donald Miller, *Building a Story Brand*

to create "who we are" messaging that ties together all our communications.

The book details how to use the seven universal story points all humans respond to, including rags to riches, a quest, renewal, and redemption, to create messaging that makes a connection to readers. Miller outlines a process we can use to craft messages that highlight the unique value we bring to our members. I'm looking forward to implementing some of these insights into our member outreach.

## Immeasurable returns of giving back

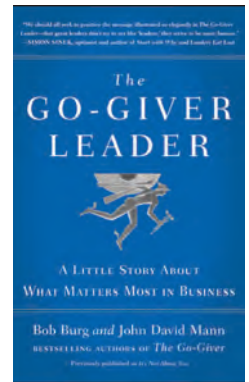
Reader: Kyle Anderson, CEO, Greater Gateway Association of REALTORS®, Ill.

I finally did it. I volunteered to serve on an NAR association executive work group, inspired in part by the classic bite-size book, *The Go-Giver: A Surprising Way of Getting More Than You Expect* by Bob Burg and David Mann.

Told though a heartwarming story about a young man named Joe, the authors deliver universal words to live by about giving and success. Instead of pushing a win-win philosophy, the authors suggest to first make sure the other person wins. By concentrating on the value you can bring to others, you will begin to attract success to yourself.

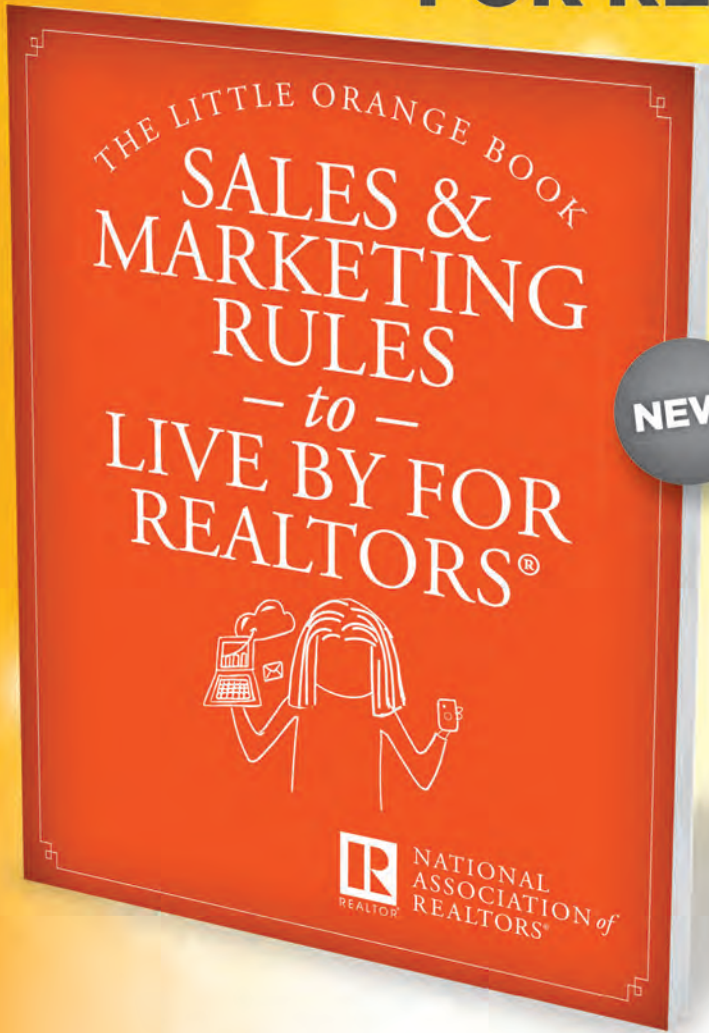
As AEs, we work so hard to make our respective associations the best they can be and to provide the most value to our membership that we sometimes forget those in our shoes at other associations.

We all experience similar struggles in this line of work, and sometimes sharing those struggles and successes with others may be the only thing that gets us through. I have shared and learned from many AEs across the country and I know I'm a better AE as a result.





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# Leading Volunteer Leaders

How member volunteers can become better leaders with your help.

**T**here's no doubt that better volunteer leaders make for better associations.

Leaders who have enthusiasm, focus, clear understanding of their roles, and mutual respect for their peers and association staff can truly better the lives and businesses of all members and the homeowners and communities they serve.

On the other hand, volunteer leaders who lack knowledge and skills, or abuse their position, can stifle progress, poison association culture, create a toxic work environment for staff, and damage the reputation of all REALTORS®.

Volunteer leadership is not easy, and training is essential. But what type of training makes the best leaders? What essential skills should they learn and how can associations deliver training in a way that encourages, enlightens, and makes the volunteer experience as rewarding for the REALTOR® as it is for the association?

REALTOR® AE Magazine set out to talk to the education designers and leaders of some of the country's best REALTOR® leadership training to find out.

## Most popular leadership training parts

At the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®, CEO Robert Authier, RCE, CAE, teaches volunteers about leadership in one of his favorite ways: studying the traits of other leaders. "When I teach our academy, I give each small group two leaders to choose from, such as FDR or Martha Stewart," says Authier. "We have them study the leader, discuss his or her qualities, practices, accomplishments, and personality; and come back to the group and report." This imbues the participants with an appreciation of the diversity of what defines leadership, he says.

Any activity that gets members moving and thinking on their feet, such as role playing, is also successful, says





Authier. Putting members in simulations of situations they may encounter prepares them to react with confidence and make sensible decisions. The “conundrums” exercise in the MAR leadership training does just that. “We break into small groups and think through a situation where, for example, the president of the association is found guilty of a crime, or the AE suddenly leaves, or—a real thing that happened to a local board here—there was a major fire that destroyed the association building,” says Authier. “What do you do and how do you deal with that as a leader?”

When it comes to leadership training for local association leaders, past president panel discussions are a favorite, Authier says, because people like to ask questions of those who have done it before.

Tapping into the wisdom of past leaders is also a top-reviewed session at Washington REALTORS® leadership academy. “The panel of past state presidents discussing their personal leadership journeys—their challenges and successes—can get very personal, emotional, and gratifying for all involved,” says association CEO Steve Francks, RCE, CAE. “Watching the connections that form between our great past leaders and those who will be following in their footsteps is magical.”

Like Washington, Massachusetts has a popular leadership academy in addition to leadership training for volunteers. But two programs can't train everyone in the state who holds a leadership or committee chair position. Where do volunteers holding leadership positions receive training if they can't travel or they don't have money for fees or time in their schedules?

Online training provided by the National Association of REALTORS®, including the REALTORS® Excelling in Association Leadership Self-Study Course and the REALTORS® Leadership Program 100, were designed to fill this void.

But as Authier and other AEs have realized, linking these NAR offerings with state and local programs through a coordinated set of competencies and body of knowledge could lead to more consistent, robust, and engaging opportunities.

To that end, the 2018 Volunteer Leadership Development Work Group, co-chaired by Authier and Tricia Thomas, RCE, CEO of the Bay

East Association of REALTORS®, Calif., is exploring ways to revamp NAR's training to focus on a curriculum that can be offered at all levels of the REALTOR® organization.

What the advisory board is hoping to develop for volunteer leaders, says Authier, is the same thing that was developed years ago for AEs; a competencies and body of knowledge document, on which all of NAR's AE professional development programs are based. The work group will transition to a permanent AEC advisory board in 2019 to facilitate an ongoing focus on volunteer leadership development programming.

## Training leaders who may never volunteer

Like many associations, the Dayton Area Board of REALTORS®, Ohio, offers leadership training to two distinct audiences. Their leadership academy is focused on producing REALTORS® who aspire to leadership positions in the community or in business, and their director orientation primes directors and committee chairs in the essentials of running meetings and association policy.

Although some academy attendees may never serve the association as a volunteer, Dayton CEO Andrew Sims, RCE, says it is nonetheless essential to the association. “You've got to make well-rounded individuals for your marketplace by teaching them things like leading in the community and how government works,” he says. “And as you actively create leaders for the community, you're also passively identifying people who would make great leaders for the association.”

The academy gives Sims a glimpse of his future leaders. “What ends up happening is that these REALTORS® start meeting people who are engaged in the association, they start learning more about what the association does, and they start realizing that the association offers more and does more than they thought.”

Sims serves on the advisory board for the state of Ohio's leadership academy, and one best practice he's learned is to always have an end-of-the-year project in mind, something that will enable the participants to apply all that they've learned. One project asks leadership academy participants to pick one of the grant opportunities NAR offers—a smart growth grant or diversity grant, for example—and develop a program to implement along with a presentation to the class and the board of directors. “It's a great end project that incorporates leadership skills such as consensus building and public speaking, plus any of these leaders could take these grant ideas back to their local associations and implement them there,” says Sims.

At the local level, Dayton's director orientation emphasizes the role of the volunteer versus the role of the staff. “We make a very clear line in the sand that the committees are there to do the work of the association at the request of the president with the approval of the [board],” says Sims. “And inside of that, the staff people are there to execute the work of the committees.”

“I truly believe that everyone has leadership qualities within them”

—Steve Francks, RCE, CAE, CEO, Washington REALTORS®

## Help leaders understand their role

Volunteer leaders, especially presidents, who are unclear of their role and overstep their purview are one of the main grievances from AE behind the renewed push for more consistent and broader-reaching leadership training, says Authier.

“I’m sure everyone in the industry has a war story about a leader who had their own agenda,” says Sims. “But what stands in their way here is a culture that’s stronger than the individual.”

The Dayton association not only pushes leadership training that reinforces the roles of volunteers and staff but also has clear policy detailing these roles. “To the AEs who struggle with presidents who do whatever they want, I can just say, at the end of day you can’t change people. You can only institute clear policy and work to change the culture enough so that future leaders will fall in line.”

## What successful leadership training programs have in common

After speaking with several leadership training program managers across the country, many common techniques and themes emerged. First, many leadership programs for volunteers and nonvolunteers begin with inviting participants to look inward and consider what type of person they are in order to understand the type of leader they will become.

A popular technique for this self-exploration exercise is the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator questionnaire (easily found online but best conducted with an experienced facilitator) that helps individuals determine their psychological preferences

for how they perceive the world and make decisions. Similar approaches include the DISC behavior assessment tool and the CliftonStrengths test. “How can you truly lead people until you know what kind of person you are and how to work with people of different personality types,” says Simms.

The self-assessment phase is often the “aha” moment for many volunteers just learning about leadership, says Francks. “I truly believe that everyone has leadership qualities within them, and that success is a matter of realizing these qualities and making the commitment to building on them. It takes someone special to have the courage to dig deep and develop the leadership qualities they possess.”

Another common element in leadership training is learning about communication styles, especially intergenerational communication and conflict resolution.

To illustrate the range of volunteer personality types and communication skills, the Memphis Area Association of REALTORS® conducts a teamwork exercise where participants are blindfolded and given an item to hold. “Each person tries to explain their item to the group,” says O’Hara Keszler, the association’s professional development manager. “Then, based on limited information from the trainer, they try to figure out how many of each item the group collectively has in front of them.” This exercise also reveals participants’ ability to manage frustration, play fair, and contribute to the team.

For more ideas on what topics, sessions, and exercises you can include in your leadership training, visit the Leadership Development page at [nar.realtor/leadership-development](http://nar.realtor/leadership-development).

—By Carolyn Schwaar



## Association-University Partnership Creates Unique Leadership Training Opportunity

The Kansas City Regional Association of REALTORS® launched a partnership in 2017 with the Henry W. Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri–Kansas City to develop the UMKC REALTOR® Leadership Academy. The academy is a seven-month leadership development program designed to provide REALTORS® with advanced education in management, business planning and development, state and local government affairs, and personal growth. The cost to participate is \$2,100.

Through classroom sessions held on the UMKC campus and in fieldwork, participants explore critical individual and organizational leadership topics and work on team-based assignments. Each year’s class of about 15 students is assigned a business coach to help with their leadership projects and personal development goals. The program has been successful so far because each module is designed not only to educate but also to help students apply their new skills to their businesses and aspirations, says Kipp Cooper, RCE, the association’s CEO. “Every part of the academy’s curriculum is built to answer three simple questions: What’s in it for me, how does this make me more successful, and is there a takeaway I can implement immediately from this session?”

Graduates of the UMKC REALTOR® Leadership Academy are granted alumni status from the UMKC Bloch School of Business, which is very attractive from a personal marketing perspective, says Cooper.



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*Liza Mendez & Pedro Hernandez, REALTORS®  
Miami, FL*

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**Real estate runs in the family.** Between father and daughter, Pedro Hernandez and Liza Mendez have over eighty years of experience in the real estate business. After immigrating from Cuba in the late 1950s, Pedro became a REALTOR® in 1966 and dove into the melting pot of the city. After the passage of the Fair Housing Act, he worked within his community to reduce housing discrimination. “Now, we are free. We don’t have that problem anymore. We can work where we want. We don’t have discrimination. That law made a big, big difference not only for the public, but for us as REALTORS.” Liza followed her father into the family business where she learned how she could be part of enforcing the letter and spirit of the Fair Housing Act. As their business grew, Liza was recognized as REALTOR® of the Year, served as the Residential President of the REALTOR® Association of Greater Miami and the Beaches, and Chairman of the Board for the Miami Association of REALTORS®. Both remain in the industry and vow to never “take the Fair Housing Act for granted.”

April 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act. We recognize the generations of brokers like Pedro Hernandez and Liza Mendez who have committed to embracing fair housing in their practice and community. We are grateful for their work and understand there’s progress yet to be made.

Visit [www.FairHousing.realtor](http://www.FairHousing.realtor) to read more about Pedro and Liza and to join the commemoration.



# Establish Roles\*

An important aspect of training your volunteer leadership is defining clear roles and responsibilities then establishing them in your policy and culture.

## Association AE

The AE is responsible for the general management the day-to-day operations of the association.

\*  
Every association defines roles slightly differently, depending on size and resources.

- Participates in association meetings.
- Approves association bylaws.
- Hires and fires staff.
- Selects the annual charity project.
- Develops the annual budget.
- Sets public policy positions as they pertain to the real estate industry.
- Deals directly with elected officials, regulatory personnel, and governmental agencies.
- Hires outside contractors (landscaping, catering, technology, etc.).
- Determines AE salary increases and bonuses.
- Budget: ● Develop, ● review, ● approve.
- Speaks on behalf of the association on social media.
- Approve member programs, products, and services.

## Association President

The president oversees how the association is governed.

Every leader has unique strengths and talents that affect their duties and responsibilities.

## Association Board of Directors

The board of directors is responsible for governing the association.



Committee members and committee chairs—your future leadership—should also be familiar with the association's leadership roles and responsibilities.



The ideal relationship between the AE and the president is one of shared responsibilities and a working partnership, recognizing that each is primarily in charge of different aspects of the association.



Separation of duties is at the heart of transparent financial management procedures. Whenever possible, responsibilities should be distributed so that no one individual controls all aspects of a transaction.



# Checklist of Leadership Training

Provide your volunteer leaders and aspiring leaders with this list to help them track their training accomplishments.

Completed  
by leaders

Completed  
by AE



## REALTOR® Leadership Program—100, 200, 300, and new 400

Four courses make up the REALTOR® Leadership Program from NAR. The L100 course is a free self-guided online course covering the essentials for new leaders, including association structures, decision making, volunteer responsibilities and roles, and more. The L200 and L300 courses are three-hour workshops for committee and board members (and aspiring volunteer leaders), and led by trained facilitators who dive deeper into topics, such as how to foster effective discussion and debate, how to build consensus, how to build and implement a strategic plan, and handling difficult situations in leadership. The new L400: Taking the Reins, debuts Sun., Aug. 5, at the Leadership Summit, Chicago. This optional, full-day, fee-based course is for presidents and presidents-elect to better understand their responsibilities during their year and to help them take on the position with confidence.



## REALTORS® Excelling in Association Leadership Self-Study Course

This free, online self-study course at [nar.realtor](http://nar.realtor) (search: REAL) is an introduction for REALTORS® who want to get involved and pursue a leadership position with their local or state association. It covers real estate issues and trends; enhancing leadership skills; meeting management; governing documents and policies; legal and regulatory activities; and visioning, planning, and budgeting.



## Leadership Assessment

REALTOR® University offers a free, in-depth leadership assessment tool to help leaders evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. The scenario-based assessment requires users to make judgments on how to lead and react in no-win and timed exercises. After the assessment, users are provided with micro courses to bolster their skills in areas where they scored poorly. There are micro courses on conflict management, building trust, emotional intelligence, effective communication, and gathering information. Available at [leadershipinstitute.realtoru.edu](http://leadershipinstitute.realtoru.edu).



## Leadership Express

These free, live sessions, held every year at the REALTORS® Legislative Meetings & Trade Expo, feature industry leaders, association management experts, or leadership consultants, addressing common and emerging topics.



## Leadership Networking

Local and state leaders can attend roundtable discussions on a variety of local topics as well as join their AEs at the State and Local Leadership Idea Exchange Councils, which are structured according to association membership size. These networking opportunities are offered free of charge at each of the two national meetings.



## Volunteer Leadership Resources

The documents in this section of [nar.realtor](http://nar.realtor) are designed to brief first-time volunteer leaders on their core responsibilities and direct them to more resources available at NAR.



## Commercial Leadership Development Day

This full-day program, held annually in conjunction with the NAR Leadership Summit in Chicago, provides AEs, staff, and incoming leaders with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to strengthen their association's commercial services.



## NAR Leadership Summit

This two-day event for AEs and their incoming presidents strengthen connections in the association community. Sessions focus on emerging industry trends, association developments, new programs, and leadership skills.

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# You Said What?!

Why bringing in a media trainer for your leadership could be your best outreach investment.



You get a simple request from a reporter to talk about home sales. “No problem,” you think, “My president lives the market!” You pass the contact info on to the reporter and tell your president to expect a call. You move on to crossing items off your to-do list and putting out your next fire. A few hours later the reporter calls back.

This scenario most likely ends in one of two ways: The reporter needs additional home sales data that the president didn't have or wants to confirm what the president said about the “standard” commission. Simple interviews can go wrong.

Although there are obviously no guarantees when talking to a reporter, providing your volunteer leaders with media training is one of the best ways to not only limit risk but also improve the standing of your association within the community.

There are myriad materials, videos, and tips online, but I find nothing can replace a live trainer working with your leaders on the specific scenarios they are likely to encounter in your market area.

## Here are 10 reasons your leaders need media awareness training:

**1. Reporters are not clients.** Your volunteer leaders are used to answering questions from clients on a daily basis. But they should never talk to reporters as if they were clients, and never have their guard down, because with reporters everything is on the record, even if it feels like unrelated small talk. Media training teaches them how to clearly answer the only questions they were asked, and even

politely evade those questions they would rather not answer.

**2. Being a good spokesperson is about preparation.** Even if your volunteer leaders are not be quick on their feet, that doesn't mean they can't be great spokespeople. Media training teaches them how to prepare for an interview.

**3. The media landscape is changing.** Mainstream news, biased news, media outlets with political agendas, personal blogs: It's hard to navigate the wide array of channels wanting to cover real estate topics. This can be a danger but it's also an opportunity. Media trainers know where the opportunities are and how to avoid the dangers of having comments or quotes intentionally misrepresented.

**4. Media trainers are paid to be critical.** Working with an outside media trainer, whether from within the larger REALTOR® family or from a communications agency, allows volunteer leaders to receive honest feedback that could be difficult (or potentially relationship-altering) for an AE to deliver.

**5. Which hat to wear?** Your volunteer leaders should always represent the association. Media training helps them recognize when they're slipping back into wearing their personal or business hat.

**6. REALTORS® are experts.** A reporter sees REALTORS® as experts who have the experience to add context and color to their

articles. Media training helps your leadership maximize their subject matter expertise while making members and the association look good in the public eye.

**7. There are rules to the game.** Reporters operate by a set of guidelines and rules. If you don't know the rules—for example, everything is on the record—you will get burned.

**8. Interview techniques are different for each medium.** Successful spokespeople know the different techniques they need to use to answer questions from a print reporter compared with a radio or television reporter.

**9. Media training goes beyond the media.** Media training teaches your volunteer leadership techniques and approaches they can use in other situations, such as answering questions at town hall forums and public advocacy.

**10. REALTORS® are busy.** Providing media training to other volunteers, not just the president, will benefit the association in the short and long terms. There will be volunteer leaders who can be backups in case the president is unavailable, and future leaders will be even more prepared. Going through media training as an AE provides you with the knowledge you need to be a successful spokesperson. It also enables you to better support and prepare volunteer leaders when the media does call.

*By Eric Berman, RCE, communications director, Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®*



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# HELP YOUR MEMBERS **IMPROVE** EFFICIENCY & STREAMLINE TRANSACTIONS

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# Six Ways to Reduce Work Stress

As REALTOR® association AEs, we deal with a lot of stresses. Officers and directors, each with their own personal goals, needs, and desires, are not the least among them.



I work for the Texas Association of REALTORS® managing more than a dozen local associations. Each has its own unique crop of leaders, personalities, and issues, so I know being able to manage stress is a vital part of well-being.

Every day, there are deadlines to meet, projects to finish, and questions to answer. Ideally, everything is perfectly organized and comes together with a rhythm that's orchestrated just right. At the day's end, everyone is happy, everything is finished, and I am a champion.

A real day for me goes more like this: Three boards have not reviewed their by-laws; one board's president has just retired from real estate; the members of another board are not getting along and are sending cryptic emails back and forth with me copied; one board's website is on the fritz again; and no one has RSVP'd for the last

continuing education class of the year.

Meanwhile, members are constantly phoning with questions such as "Can you fix my listing?" "Have you updated the minutes for last month's meetings?" "Why does it take so long for me to get my password?" "What do I get for my dues?"

Mix that all together and you've got a recipe for a stress meltdown.

It's difficult to find joy in a job when the stress gets a hold of you. My job as a multi-board manager can be extremely stressful. But, as someone managing generalized anxiety disorder, I've learned a lot over the years from research, personal coaches, and expert seminars about controlling stress.

**Here are some situations you may encounter and the techniques I use to keep stress from taking over.**

**Stress situation:** A new president contacts me looking for an email about an event that should have been sent to all members last week, but I never received it and had no prior notice about sending it. I discover during the conversation that the email address she had was wrong. No one attended the event because no one knew about it, and the president is furious.

**Stress-limiting technique No. 1:** Breathe. The first thing I do is take a deep breath. I say to myself "deep, calming breath" before I respond to an angry caller. I will continue to take those cleansing breaths while I listen to the caller. This gives them the opportunity to vent while I lower my stress. As you breathe, bring the air into your chest and expand your diaphragm to get air deep in your belly. Hold your breath for two seconds before you let it gently and quietly go.

**Stress situation:** A hot-tempered director on the board has just informed me that I'm "useless" because something he wants me to do conflicts with board bylaws. After I've taken a deep, calming breath, I remind myself that although it may seem that I'm under a personal attack, I'm not. It's not about me. People want what they want, and sometimes they do not know how to control themselves when they don't get it.

**Stress-limiting technique No. 2:** Don't make a problem personal. If I choose not to accept others' fits as personal, they are much less likely to stress me out.



Read a book for pleasure while you eat your lunch. Then, when you get back to work, you'll find that your stress level is lower, and the quality of your work is better.



**Stress situation:** It's October and I've got core standards certifications to submit, but only a handful of boards have turned in enough information. I have to prepare information for a meeting and 60 other things that need to be done quickly. It can be overwhelming, which is one of the biggest causes for intense stress.

**Stress-limiting technique No. 3:** Take it one little bit at a time. I start my day by making a list of what I plan to accomplish and then add, shift, and check off things as the day progresses. The best part of making a list is reviewing it at the start of the next day and realizing how much I accomplished.

**Stress situation:** I've avoided a conversation with a member of my leadership that I anticipate will be unpleasant. The conversation must take place before the next board meeting, and time is running out. Instead I want to procrastinate, so the stress builds with every passing moment.

**Stress-limiting technique**

**No. 4:** Just do it. This one may be obvious, but it's never easy. Still, I force myself to start that thing I'm putting off so it becomes easier to continue getting things done. By minimizing procrastination, I make huge strides in overcoming stress.

**Stress situation:** I'm cruising along with my well-organized day, checking things off my very long list, but the phone keeps ringing with calls that are mostly for other staff members, or the MLS, or a committee chair. I'm tempted to take all the calls anyway because I'm a super multitasker and I don't want to burden anyone else.

**Stress-limiting technique No. 5:** Delegate. Many people find it a real challenge to share the work. I see it constantly with board leadership. They get stressed out because they don't know how to divide the work and let a committee handle it. Sharing the work can go a long way toward building your community as well as helping keep your stress well-managed.

**The last technique, No. 6,** works for any situation and may be the most important step in keeping stress from taking over your life: Have fun and relax. You have to have something you do that's a joy, an entertainment, or a release. Laugh when you can. Take a break and go for a quick walk. Visit with a co-worker for a bit, color in a meditation coloring book, or read a book for pleasure while you eat your lunch. Then, when you get back to work, you'll find that your stress level is lower, and the quality of your work is better.

Stress is a part of our human experience. There is no way to eliminate it, but by using

these six interventions in our lives, we can keep it from consuming us and robbing us of the joy that our day-to-day life has to offer.

## Snack for lower stress

Foods can help tame stress in several ways. I often find myself tempted to skimp on eating or skip meals to power through a stressful day. However, what I learned from experience over the years is that eating small healthy snacks throughout the day can help counter the impact of stress with a long-term impact of improved productivity and greater focus.

Eating six to eight times daily can boost your metabolism and lower your blood pressure. Just make sure that you are snacking well.



**Nicci Haynie, RCE,** is the multi-board manager for the Texas Association of REALTORS®. Contact her at 512-370-2160 or [nhaynie@texasrealtors.com](mailto:nhaynie@texasrealtors.com).

# Data Privacy Rules

The EU's new regulations *may* not affect your association now, but here's what you should know.

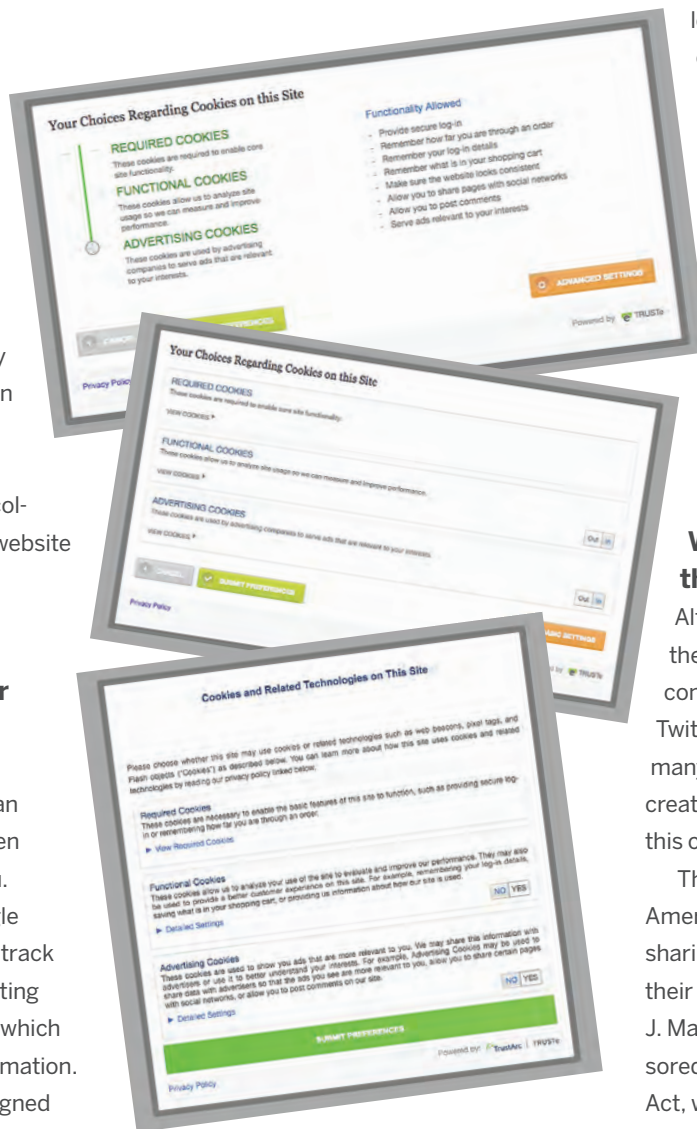
You may have noticed that many websites have recently updated their privacy policies and terms of use, and that some have required you to accept the new terms in order to continue on the site. These changes are the result of the General Data Privacy Regulation, a new European Union data protection and privacy law designed to give EU residents control over their personal data collected by online businesses and website operators.

## So what does this mean for your members and your REALTOR® association?

Generally speaking, if your website has visitors from the European Union—and it probably does—then this law technically applies to you. For example, if you're using Google Analytics or a similar program to track your site visits, then you're collecting the IP addresses of your visitors, which is considered their personal information. If any European residents have signed up for "new listing" alerts on your public MLS, then you're holding information about them. If a former member signed up for your association newsletter years ago but has since moved to Europe, his or her personal information is still in your database.

Even though the GDPR applies only to the data of EU residents, the regulation also covers an entity that holds the data of EU residents, which is potentially your associa-

tion and MLS. Consent of these individuals is required prior to your "processing" or using their data. The data privacy law is an "opt-in" regulation, the opposite of how websites have generally operated up until now. The main question in determining whether or not you have to comply hinges on whether your business targets EU residents.



## How will an EU law be enforced on U.S.-based associations?

Although there certainly will be challenges to EU countries trying to use U.S. courts to enforce the regulation, right now it is too early to know how that will play out. Plus, more information is still forthcoming on how the EU will even know if you're misusing EU residents' information, so stay tuned to our realtor for new developments.

At the National Association of REALTORS®, our website developers are monitoring progress on the regulation, but have not instituted EU-style data privacy or GDPR yet.

## Will the U.S. follow in the EU's footsteps?

Although currently only EU residents have these data privacy rights, many American companies, including Facebook, Google, Twitter, and Microsoft are opting to provide many similar protections to U.S. residents, creating a new standard of data privacy in this country.

The U.S. Congress has openly criticized American tech giants, such as Facebook, for sharing the personal data of users without their consent. In April, U.S. Senators Edward J. Markey and Richard Blumenthal cosponsored a GDPR-like bill called the Consent Act, which would enforce more transparency around data that is being stored by companies, as well as enable consumers to opt out of companies selling their data. There are also proposals for new data privacy laws in many states. One in California that recently passed and goes into effect in 2020, gives consumers more control over and insight into the spread of their personal information online and makes it easier for consumers to sue companies after a data breach.



Now is the time to review what type of information you collect about site visitor or users, how you keep that information safe from hackers, and what third-party partners may have access.

To give you a sense of how data privacy laws work, here's how you would comply with GDPR, which may also reflect any new state law initiatives.

### How to obtain consent

Companies can obtain consent from site visitors to use their data in a variety of ways. One option is to use pop-up check boxes asking site visitors to signify their consent; another is to refer visitors to the technical settings page where you can also enable them to opt in to their data being used. If you go with pop-up boxes, for example (see *graphics*), visitors must actively confirm their consent, such as by ticking an unchecked opt-in box.

These consent methods must link to your privacy policy that describes how you will use visitors' personal information, such as to personalize content and ads, provide social media features, track visitor preferences, analyze traffic, and support and improve the site. You must also detail what information you store on visitors, how long you store it, and how you store it. And you must provide an option for visitors to request that you delete all their personal information.

If you sell or rent lists containing individuals' personal information—for example people who signed up on your MLS to receive market updates—you must obtain their consent prior to the transfer of their data. An individual can withdraw their consent to processing at any time.

Another issue under the GDPR is the use of data processors, which is an entity that collects or uses data on behalf of another. For associations, an example would include when the association provides its member data to RAMCO. Your association is respon-

sible for the actions of any processors and will need to make sure that any data subject to the privacy regulations are treated appropriately. Therefore, associations subject to the privacy regulations need to identify those entities acting as data processors on their behalf and add language to their contracts that sets forth the requirements for the handling of personal data. If you provide links from your site to other sites, such as Survey Monkey or Facebook or nar.realtor, you are not responsible to the security of data that people choose to enter there.

How you apply these options to your website depends on the technology you

have. If your association website is hosted on the WordPress platform, for example, there are a variety of plugins for GDPR compliance. Contact your website designer, host, or a knowledgeable IT expert to install the necessary plugins on your site.

Stay tuned to nar.realtor to learn the full impact of privacy regulations on your association.



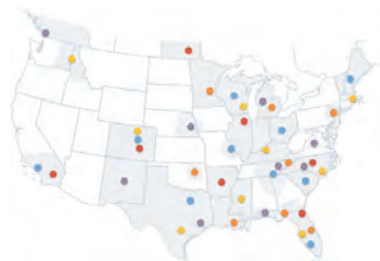
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# NAR Grants Help Drive Commercial Member Engagement

Locally focused programs on hot commercial issues attracts a loyal following.

One of the best ways to expand association services to a new audience and build non-dues revenue is to offer commercial educational programs and networking opportunities.

The Akron Cleveland Association of REALTORS® Commercial Forum is reaping the rewards of offering such events.

With funding from NAR's Commercial Innovation Grant program, the association launched an education program with industry partners that attracts nationally known speakers to address cutting-edge topics facing the region. These regular "What's Driving Northeast Ohio" events—which are unlike what anyone else is doing in the area—attract both commercial and residential members, other industry professionals, and the media, says Therese Covell, the association's professional standards and development director.

The key to the association's commercial education event popularity is the way it provides REALTORS® with relevant information they can immediately use in their day-to-day business. "We want our presentations to be different than everyone else's CE classes and have a clear focus on the Akron-Cleveland market," Covell says. "Members appreciate how the expert panelists speak with a local emphasis."

The theme of the 2017 series of events was "Technology Trends in 2020 & Beyond." Popular sessions included how online shopping is altering traditional retail distribution, cold storage solutions for food and food prep, and the potential impact of driverless cars on commercial real estate.

"Active participation in this type of education and networking helps us know if we

are making forward-looking deals that will be valuable in 20 to 30 years as we counsel our clients, users of space, developers of space, and investors," says commercial member Howard Lichtig, SIOR.

Lichtig put that theory into practice immediately by connecting with Nick Pacitti,

Tippmann Innovation's director of cold chain consulting, who served as a panelist in a session on warehousing and logistics. "Pacitti's comments helped me understand that there is a hole in our market and how I can respond to it," Lichtig explains. He is now under contract to build a 400,000-square-foot food hub coolant and freezer project in Northeast Ohio.

## 2018 Commercial Innovation Grant

recipients are busy launching a wide range of initiatives. Contact these associations for more on their innovative approaches to commercial programs.

- The **Central Pasco Association of REALTORS®**, Fla., will host "The Nexus Project" – a series of four major events designed to connect commercial members with local real estate opportunities.
- The **Columbus REALTORS®**, Ohio, will develop and launch a program to identify and expose current college students to the commercial industry through site tours, job shadowing, and intraindustry functions.
- The **Michigan REALTORS®** will create a publication specifically for commercial members to address legislative issues, economic trends, and legal issues of importance in Michigan.
- The **Northeast Tennessee Association of REALTORS®** will create an extension of its Leadership Academy focusing on commercial real estate.

To apply for a Commercial Innovation Grant, visit [nar.realtor/commercial-innovation-grants](http://nar.realtor/commercial-innovation-grants).

## Looking Under the Hood

"What's Driving Northeast Ohio: Technology Trends in 2020 & Beyond" was held in October 2017 in the Main Classroom Auditorium at Cleveland State University, where the Akron Cleveland Association enjoys strong relationships with the business school. Several students from CSU's Urban Studies and MBA programs attended the 2017 event, connecting REALTORS® and current students seeking post-graduate real estate careers.

"One of our large commercial brokers has established an internship with CSU students," Covell says, "and hired two CSU grads to work for his firm as researchers." Not all of these graduates will become brokers, of course, but they will participate in real estate.

In October, the association will host "What's Driving Northeast Ohio: Neighborhoods" with a focus on what local and national trends are driving neighborhood redevelopment and revitalization.



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# Finding Harmony in Multigenerational Leadership

Overcoming communication barriers as a pathway to cooperation.

At my leadership installation event last December, I quickly realized that our executive committee and board of directors had huge age diversity. The president and past president are in the silent generation (yes, in their 70s), our president elect is a millennial (in his early 30s) and our first vice president is in Generation X (in her 40s). The age range of the collective leadership is 28 to over 70, and although they seem to get along and they get things accomplished, I began to notice that the generations often had a failure to communicate. Sometimes these leaders seemed like they were speaking different languages, and staff was the interpreter, which created an impediment to productivity.

Did they really not understand each other? Did they not respect each other?

When I asked the board how they felt about serving with multiple generations, I got the expected politically correct responses: "It's great because older members have more experience," and "It's great because younger members have new ideas." But I suspected that more feelings might be hidden much deeper.

In order to uncover more about how everyone really felt, I promised anonymity. And I got a lot of responses like these:

- "If I had a frustration with the younger generation it would be with their work ethic. They seem to be much more laid back."
- "Sometimes the older generations think they know best, and they are not willing to listen to new ideas."
- "Younger generations think they know everything due to being high-tech, and they feel they are possibly more educated."



Central Oregon Association of REALTORS® 2018 leadership team: Bill Bellamy, president; Tony Levison, president elect; Jack Zika, first vice president; Carolyn Bostwick, past president.

• "The older generations often think they know all the answers, and have a 'been there done that, let's not look at it again' attitude."

These sentiments are played out on our societal level, so it is no surprise to see them at the micro level within our leadership. The difference, however, is that we still have to keep this 2,500-member ship cruising forward, which means communication is critical.

These general perceptions within our leadership, whether true or not, often chocked their ability to appreciate alternate views and to work effectively in the best interest of the membership as a whole. This affected our programs, policies, services, and strategic goals.

For example, our president is focused on the long-term, best use and maintenance of our physical association building, while our president elect doesn't even think we will need a building in a few years. At times it truly feels like it's not just difficult to communicate but that we are not even having the same conversation.

Another example; On the issue of supporting local development, the group was mainly split along generational lines with younger board members more willing to

embrace pro-development philosophies and affordable housing options even if they required greater density. On the other side, some older board members supported protecting open spaces and the area's rural and recreational lifestyle.

Generations hear things differently, and they say things differently. Does saying that past boards have been too conservative in spending money mean that future boards are going to blow it all? Does saying that younger generations depend on technology too much mean they are bad board members? It all depends on how these comments are interpreted and by whom.

One step we took was to work with each board member to uncover how they want to be communicated with and how they can best communicate with their peers. Our president elect (a millennial) rarely looks at email and wants texts, while our president emails. Our first vice president uses social media and our past president prefers in-person conversations. Going forward we are working to have staff better bridge the gaps in communication and help get to a place of understanding.

In our investigation of generational differences, did we find a silver bullet or one



language that everyone understood? Unfortunately, no. But having the conversation, addressing the issue, and getting past the stereotypes set us on the right course. The more our members learn about members of other generations, the more their opposite perspectives and values make sense. That laid-back approach to work isn't lazy, it's a way to balance work and personal life to reduce stress and be more productive. That objection to dense development isn't wanting to hold on to the past, it's an experience-based belief that nature, once paved over, doesn't return.

As we grapple with the changes in the industry, we know our boards must be as diverse as our membership, so we need to have these discussions about intergenerational communication at the board level, no matter how difficult.



**Kim Gammond** is communications & public affairs director at the Central Oregon Association of REALTORS®. Contact her at 541-382-6027 or kim@coar.com.

## 4 Leadership Team Tasks That Create Intergenerational Conflict

Intergenerational misunderstandings can occur in a variety of situations, but for teams, generational expert and author Tammy Erickson finds that generational conflict usually centers around four essential activities:

- 1. Choosing where and when to work:** Older colleagues speak of “going to work” where as younger workers, in contrast, tend to view work as something you do—anywhere, any time.
- 2. Communicating:** Younger volunteer leaders expect rapid responses from peers via social media or text; they are likely to feel frustrated if they don't hear from older colleagues for a day or so. Team members from older generations

may feel offended by a lack of face-to-face or at least voice-to-voice interaction.

**3. Getting together:** Older generations are planners and schedulers, while younger generations are spur-of-the-moment coordinators, says Erickson. To younger generations, the extent of meetings in most workplaces today seems inefficient.

**4. Learning new things:** Older generations are inclined to attend training classes and absorb information before beginning a task, while younger generations are largely “on demand” learners who are likely to be bored by a project that begins with a lengthy training phase, says Erickson.

# FINDING SUCCESS



## “WHY ARE SOME EXECUTIVES SUCCESSFUL AND OTHERS ARE NOT?”

Two execs might seem identical – education, situation, experience. But one remains static, while the other is highly successful. Why is that?

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# Keep an Eye Out for Future Leaders

Walt Baczkowski on the three essential pieces of a successful association.

When it comes to leadership, few AEs can match the experience and involvement of Walter T. Baczkowski Jr., RCE, CEO of the San Francisco Association of REALTORS®. This second-generation AE (his father, Walt Sr., was the AE of the Pittsburgh Association of REALTORS®) has a career that spans 40 years and five REALTOR® associations. He was on the board that launched realtor.com®. He was on the committee that created the RCE designation, and, as the AE of the New Jersey Association of REALTORS®, he was instrumental in establishing the REALTORS® Relief Fund after 9/11.

So it was no surprise to anyone—except maybe Baczkowski himself—when it was announced at the AE committee Forum in Washington, D.C., in May that he was the 2018 Magel Award of Excellence recipient. “Apparently, my president and president-elect nominated me. It’s very humbling. I had no idea,” he says. “I just do my job the best I can.”

Baczkowski’s job takes up 60 hours of his week. “I’m in the office at 6:30 a.m. to give myself an hour to get work done, because once the staff comes in they want my time, and members need my time.”

His busy association holds an event almost nightly and lately, events have attracted an average attendance of 1,000 members a month.

One successful program, which attracted more than 600 people, featured developers talking about planned projects and the local housing boom. Another event about blockchain and bitcoin had three sponsors to cover all the costs and drew 300 attendees.

How does the association create programs that attract so much member engagement?

“We go out and listen to members and

learn their issues,” says Baczkowski. Every time he meets with brokers, he asks: “What’s working at the association and what’s missing?” From that information, he and his leadership develop a strategic plan that addresses member needs.

The association’s five-year strategic plan, called “Vision 20-20,” is printed on a 10-by-4-foot board in the association office. “When I’m in a staff or directors meeting and someone brings up something they want to do, I ask, ‘How does that fit within our strategic plan?’” says Baczkowski. When a director wants to start a new project, Baczkowski



points to the plan and says, “Okay, but then, what do you want to get rid of?”

This tactic helps leaders focus on the long-term goals and weigh the value of each program, he says.

Having a solid plan and listening to members are two reasons the San Francisco association is so successful. Another is its leadership.

“There are a lot of AEs who believe that you shouldn’t get involved in picking leaders and that you should stay away from the nomination process, and maybe that’s true,”

says Baczkowski, “but you better be doing it behind the scenes.”

Baczkowski believes strongly that AEs need to identify and encourage the people who will make good leaders, while also identifying and containing the people who won’t.

To identify the members with leadership potential, Baczkowski reads the committee minutes and regularly attends committee meetings to see who are the ones driving change and getting things done. One year, he noticed a lot of action coming from his MLS and technology committee and identified the key driver. He approached this member personally and encouraged her to join the board of directors. “Bottom line, I recognized the commitment and encouraged leadership to give this person additional opportunities, and now we have someone who’s in a position to be an SFAR president,” he says.

Association leaders can rise up from any direction. “Some come up from the Women’s Council and some from Professional Standards; you never know where your next great leader will come from, so you have to be actively involved,” says Baczkowski.

Great leaders have extraordinary commitment, says Baczkowski, but sometimes presidents become so involved that their own businesses suffer. “I tell them that it doesn’t have to be that way if you count on us, the staff, to help you.”

In all of the REALTOR® associations that he has led (Toledo, Metro Detroit, New Jersey, San Diego, and San Francisco), Baczkowski puts a lot of time and effort into hiring the right staff. “Start with hiring the right people, engaging the best leaders, and developing a solid plan,” advises Baczkowski as the three pillars for success.

Walt Baczkowski will receive his Magel Award in November at the 2018 REALTORS® Conference & Expo in Boston.







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