Get Your Message to Consumers
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“WE ARE THE VOICE FOR REAL ESTATE”
“10 REASONS TO USE A REALTOR®”
“NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO BUY!”
“JOIN REALTORS® IN THE FIGHT FOR FAIR HOUSING”
“GET REALTOR®”

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Have an impact beyond your association  Page 28
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What I Saw at the Revolution

Michael Theo, RCE, CAE, CEO, Wisconsin REALTORS® Association, 2017 chair of the AE Committee

AR President Bill Brown’s theme for this year was “Revolution,” an inspiring leitmotif focusing on the insurmountable change and innovation in our industry and our association and the ensuing challenges and opportunities we face as a consequence. As his presidency draws to a close, so, too, does my chairmanship of the AE Committee, so it seems like a good time to ruminate on what I saw at the Revolution.

The challenges presented by this rolling revolution can fill volumes, but I’ll focus on two biggies: advocacy and professionalism.

Like politics, all markets are local, yet real estate transactions have become increasingly affected by Washington-based regulations, infused with a churning of political partisanship. Tax reform, financial reforms, and regulatory reforms each has a direct impact on real estate. Therefore, like no other time in our association’s past, we need to acknowledge and embrace the primacy of these epic policy battles to ensure the outcome of being an advocacy organization and mobilize the human and financial resources necessary to prevail on these blockbuster issues now.

Equally challenging is a multiplicity of issues surrounding professionalism in our industry. Perhaps more than any single issue I’ve witnessed in my 32 years with the REALTOR® organization, our members yearn to improve the level of professionalism. Yet despite our codes of ethics and conduct and the professional standards processes we’ve developed, our standards and aspirations are often ignored or not adequately pursued or enforced. The revolution needed here still eludes us. We must devise a road map to achieve professionalism and implement it now.

This professionalism applies to us as AEs as well. As the incoming president of the Wisconsin Society of Association Executives, I speak from experience when I say REALTOR® executives are among the best association managers in the country. But as the incoming leader of this group of AEs that can and should recommit to improving themselves and their organizations. I am supremely optimistic that each of these will come to pass.

“Whatever I saw at the Revolution this year was a strong advocacy organization that needs to get stronger. I saw a fantastic group of professional REALTORS® who rightfully seek to improve the level of professionalism in every sense of the word. And I saw a remarkably talented group of AEs that can and should recommit to improving themselves and their organizations. I am supremely optimistic that each of these will come to pass.”

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve. I leave still looking for the adequate words of praise for the turbocharged NAR staff I’ve had the pleasure to work with. Their job is extraordinarily difficult but Cindy Sampalis and the entire NAR AE support staff epitomizes professionalism in every sense of the word. And I leave with high expectations for incoming AE Chair Rebecca Grossman and Vice Chair Duncan McKenzie. And finally, I leave with much gratitude to all of you. REALTOR® AEs are truly inspirational—professionally and personally. Thank you all for the opportunity to serve.

This professionalism applies to us as AEs as well. As the incoming president of the Wisconsin Society of Association Executives, I speak from experience when I say REALTOR® executives are among the best association managers in the country. But the given magnitude of the challenges we face today, what we have isn’t good enough. We should set a national goal that every AE, at every level of the organization, in every corner of the country, should either hold the RCE designation or be actively working toward it. Only after we demand the highest level of professionalism from ourselves can we effectively assist our members in realizing the highest level of professionalism they espouse.

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REALTOR® Associations Nationwide Spring Into Disaster Relief Mode

In communities across Texas, Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, REALTOR® associations are distributing hurricane relief aid and issuing grants to help those affected rebuild their lives. REALTOR® associations across the nation that have sent tens of thousands of dollars in donations and relief supplies have made this possible.

In the first two weeks following the hurricanes, the National Association’s REALTORS® Relief Foundation collected more than $1.8 million from state and local associations, members, and others. “The National Association of REALTORS® wants our members and the consumers they serve to know that the REALTOR® family is here for them,” says NAR President William E. Brown. “We encourage one and all to join NAR in donating to the REALTORS® Relief Foundation.”

In Florida, the Florida REALTORS® Disaster Relief Fund continues to collect donations to assist the state’s affected members. “Power just beginning to be restored to many areas so the need assessment has just begun,” says Mary Grant, Florida REALTORS® vice president and general counsel.

Taking action and heavy lifting

To help their fellow Texans to the south as they recover from hurricane damage and flooding, Collin County Association of REALTORS® not only donated to relief funds but is helping REALTORS® get back to business by waiving secondary membership dues and fees.

“Members of 14 Texas REALTORS® associations were among those impacted by Hurricane Harvey,” says Jonna Fernandez, RCE, Collin County’s COO. “To help ease their burden, several local franchise offices have extended offers to practitioners within their brand to temporarily relocate their business to the Dallas-Fort Worth area. We’re doing our part to assist these REALTORS® as they get back on their feet by waiving dues.”

Here are other ways local REALTOR® associations have found to aid fellow associations and their members:

- The Northeast Florida Association of REALTORS® had just finished packaging 1,000 Totes for Hope—Ziploc bags filled with needed toiletry and health items—to send to Texas for Hurricane Harvey relief when Hurricane Irma hit. Fortunately, there was no major damage to the association building or staff’s property, but the power outages and flooding kept the office closed for nearly a week.
- The Houston Association of REALTORS® launched a new program enabling members, property owners, landlords, and property managers to post homes that they agree to make available on a temporary basis to those displaced by storm damage and flooding. Some of the postings on har.com/temporaryhousing are available for reduced rent or even free, depending on the owner.
- Hilda Ramirez, director of PR, communications, and education for the Santa Clara County Association of REALTORS®, Cali., flew to Houston in September with a group of Vietnamese- and Spanish-speaking members to help majority ethnic communities with both translation and clean-up.

Stay tuned to REALTOR® AE magazine on Facebook for more on how local associations are springing into disaster relief mode.
Local Association Finds Secret Formula for Boosting Broker Involvement in Advocacy

In three years, Cape Fear REALTORS® in Wilmington, N.C., has moved from having one of the lowest levels of Broker Involvement Program participation to one of the highest. NAR’s Broker Involvement Program provides broker-owners with a free tool to rally their agents on critical legislative issues affecting the real estate industry. Member participation in NAR calls for action is increased because notices are sent through the broker’s email system, not through the general NAR email.

“We tried several things to secure broker buy-in,” says Shane Johnson, Cape Fear REALTORS® chief operating officer. “First, we sent a letter to brokers explaining the value of BIP; followed with scripted calls.” The script was brief and, beyond the initial benefits, explained that enrollment would help the association comply with Core Standards.

Proposed Change to MLS Dues Policy

The Silicon Valley and the Santa Clara County associations of REALTORS® are using a $300,000 grant from the California Association of REALTORS® Housing Affordability Fund to aid first-time home buyers in their area. Through the grant, first-time home buyers can receive up to $5,000 toward their closing costs. Because of the extraordinary cost of housing—where the median price of a single-family home is about $1.1 million—the grant program is attracting a lot of positive press for the associations.

“We are extremely excited to contribute to the affordable housing efforts in a community where affordable housing is almost non-existent,” the associations said in a statement. For more, visit housingtrustsv.org.

Join NAR’s Yearlong Fair Housing Act 50th Anniversary Celebration

Join NAR in commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act by advocating housing opportunity in your community and across the country. In a yearlong awareness and action campaign throughout 2018, NAR will provide a variety of resources to support new approaches to fair housing issues. New and refreshed member training materials will emphasize the importance of awareness, understanding, and compliance with the Fair Housing Act.

For more resources and to get involved, visit FairHousing.realtor.
Innovate to Attract Commercial Members

Developing commercial programs and services made easier with grants and success stories.

If you’d like to engage more commercial practitioners in your association but aren’t certain where to start, the National Association of REALTORS® has a wealth of resources for you. One in particular is the Commercial Innovation Grant Program, which can provide funding to grow your commercial member base and benefits. Grants typically range from $500 to $2,500 and can be used for such things as commercial education, commercial real estate advocacy, and commercial events. Here is one of the most recent success stories from a local association that used the grant to boost its visibility and value to commercial real estate practitioners.

If You Build It, Business Will Come

Earlier this year, the Greater Fort Worth Association of REALTORS®, Texas, received a Commercial Innovation Grant to partially fund its first Economic Development Expo, an event the association hopes will become a core annual program.

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The association’s primary goal was to connect REALTORS® with major developers, elected officials, municipal staff, and economic development councils. The event would facilitate deal-making and networking opportunities where members could receive concrete information, strong leads, and action plans. “Organizing our event this way facilitated cities getting in front of commercial members to say ‘these are the projects we’re offering, this is what we’re doing,’” says Robert Gleason, the association CEO.

Gleason feels strongly that there is great value in enhancing commercial services. “Most of us run a very good show with residential members,” he says, “but anything you can do to attract commercial brokers makes you a stronger association locally and politically. The gravitas and experience they bring is invaluable.”

The Economic Development Expo was held at Cendera Hall. Exhibitor booths were sold on a first-come first-serve basis for $450 each.

A task force of seven commercial members was appointed to oversee marketing while members prepared a pamphlet and reached out to area economic development councils and developers to participate, as well as larger commercial brokerages that were not currently members. REALTOR® members could attend for free, and association leadership staffed a booth to talk about the value of REALTOR® membership and answer questions. Finally, the task force worked with the Fort Worth Business Press to provide marketing before the expo and coverage on the day of the event.

Measuring Success and Planning for the Future

The response was overwhelmingly positive, with more than 200 of the association’s commercial members attending. The association also has attracted new members since the event, which Gleason says have been one of two types: “The first was residential agents who showed up and wanted to learn more about transitioning to commercial real estate, and the second was established brokers who joined after learning more about the organization.”

Gleason already has plans for expanding the Economic Development Expo in 2018. “We’d like to get out in front of the marketing side of things earlier,” he says. “Some of the (councils) we wanted were double booked, and so it’s wise to plan this out as far in advance as possible.” He also wants to facilitate more assistance and input from members during the planning stages. “From a staff perspective, those commercial brokers will know who they want to hear from at the event. They will point you in the direction of what type of exhibitors to invite and often provide the connections or do the invites themselves.”

Commercial Innovation Grant applications along with a library of past projects and resources are online at nar.realtor/commercial-innovation-grants.
consumer outreach

Much of the success of the REALTOR® organization depends on capturing the hearts and minds of consumers. How effectively are you reaching out?

When consumers understand what a REALTOR® brings to the transaction, they are more likely to work with one. When residents understand how REALTORS® are advocating for their private property rights and more livable communities, they are more likely to join in that fight. And when home owners and buyers receive unbiased information on navigating the local housing market and homebuying programs, they are more likely to view REALTORS® as the experts.

Reaching out to consumers through the media and social media, going door to door, and hosting events has been a core activity at REALTOR® associations long before it became required under the Core Standards. But now, as more associations engage consumers at every level of the organization, the Core Standards. But now, as more associations engage consumers at every level of the organization, the Core Standards. But now, as more associations engage consumers at every level of the organization, the Core Standards. But now, as more associations engage consumers at every level of the organization, the Core Standards. But now, as more associations engage consumers at every level of the organization, the.

Next, take advantage of the vast amount of resources and expertise from the National Association of REALTORS®, including the consumer outreach strategic plan templates that cover dozens of objectives and come in three sizes (for small, medium, and large associations), available at nar.realtor; search for “consumer outreach best practices.”

By Caralyn Schwart. Kelsey R. Croston, Suzanne Westrum, and Kealey Waring

Our Consumer Campaign: We Are The R

Savvy social media materials and member buy-in boost the REALTOR® brand

Helping consumers understand the value a REALTOR® brings to the homebuying and homeselling process boosts members’ business. Most associations post REALTOR® value taking points on their websites, many produce marketing materials for members to pass on to consumers or the media, and a few (with the resources to do so) create media campaigns, which include television commercials, print and electronic advertising, and social media posts that address their local market conditions and unique communications needs.

Our Consumer Campaign: We Are The R

| REALTOR® VALUE | LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY | MARKET EXPERTISE |

By Kelsey R. Croston, director of brand experience, Richmond Association of REALTORS®, Va.

When I polled a room of Virginia’s local AEs in July, only a couple said they have run consumer campaigns. Yet the majority raised their hands when asked, “Would you start one if there was a realistic way to fit it into your organization’s strategy?”

“We Are The R” is our public awareness campaign to promote using a REALTOR®. The campaign launched in 2012 and, every year since, we’ve added new commercials and social media material, all directing consumers back to WeAreTheR.com.

The original idea came from our leadership, and because the campaign is producing results, subsequent leaders have embraced the program.

“Public outreach like this is not for every association because it eats up resources, both financial and staff, and the results are difficult to quantify. We knew we could afford it only if we got members to back the content and drive the campaign to consumers. If your campaign is a top-down, all staff-driven effort, it will cost much more and be far less effective. But if you can rally member support and get their buy-in, which isn’t easy, you can build greater momentum because members will feel they are an essential part of the campaign to promote themselves. We’ve found it’s both more economical and effective if we empower members to promote the consumer materials we create. Without member excitement, we would be solely at the mercy of social media algorithms and paid advertising.

If step one is to design the campaign around member buy-in, step two is to include member “influencers” in the brainstorming process for the creative. The concepts for our campaigns come from merging the talent and instincts of our board, communications committee, CEO, and communications staff. That sounds like a lot of cooks in the kitchen, but after
The California Association of REALTORS® has an extensive TV, radio, and digital campaign, and a robust tool-set that REALTORS® can use to enhance their personal branding. The long-running “Champions of Home” campaign emphasizes the benefits of working with a REALTOR® and how REALTORS® are connected to their community and the economic health of the area. The latest campaigns feature REALTOR® Egypt Sherrod, host of HGTV’s “Flipping Virgins” and “Property Virgins”; Telemundo star Edgardo Gazcon; and a selection of “real Californians” sharing their personal stories about why they used a REALTOR®.

All ideas are gathered and vetted, our CEO makes the final decision on concept and gives communications staff full ownership over how the ideas are implemented. Each campaign we’ve had focuses on where we think the market will be and incorporates the current market conditions. Do we need to encourage people to buy or list? Do we need inventory or do we need buyers? For example, our 2014 campaign focused on attracting buyers by promoting the low interest rates and rising rents. This year’s low inventory inspired our “Leave it to the REALTORS®” campaign, aimed at owners and focused on the ease of using a REALTOR® to manage everything related to selling a home.

We don’t stray from content that can be mostly conceptualized and produced in house. But when we do hire vendors, we make sure that they understand that our NAR members are the ones using the materials—and they won’t use them if they don’t like them.

Video has yielded our highest engagement rates with members. They’re aware it catches the consumer’s eye, and it’s so easy for them to show their personal brand by tacking on an often pithy comment when they share.

To save money, we use services like Bitable and GoAnimate to create animated videos in house. Live action is created through a hodgepodge of resources. We write scripts, host casting calls, and direct on set, but often outsource the videography and post editing.

Pinterest, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are the social platforms that now complement the WeAreTheR.com campaign site. We are continuously evaluating the decision to house this content on a separate domain from our member site. At this point, the divide is still working for us because it helps members understand what’s for their eyes and what we are putting out there for them to share with consumers.

Material on social platforms suggests that we want members to share it, but that message isn’t always understood, so we give members express permission and encouragement—share via text, mass email, and briefly speaking at classes, WCR meetings, and sales meetings.

The real ROI of consumer campaigns
Unfortunately, there is no way for us to know if members are getting more clients because of the work we’re putting out there to consumers. What we can do is gauge the overall feedback from members on the campaigns and how excited they get for the materials. For example, we made promotional posters, which members hang on their office walls and give as closing gifts.

You can look at the clicks and engagement metrics on social media and see what content is popular, but at the end of the day, you don’t know if it’s members or consumers looking at it. The real payoff is intangible. Members get a sense that the association is doing something for them and their business. They are interacting more often with association materials, and the association is more present in their daily business.

For those venturing into a local campaign initiative for the first time, my advice is to not be overly concerned with what you or your board defines as success. The long-term understanding about the needs of the members is well worth any potential failures when creating consumer material.

Our Consumer Campaign: REALTORS® play many roles
Media campaign highlights all the ways members serve clients and the community
When the leadership of the Kansas City Regional REALTOR® Association came together to brainstorm how best to put investment earnings into new programs for members, they considered a wide range of services and products. The goal was to find something impactful for the community and something that would reach and benefit all members, says Christian Zarif, 2016 association president.

Two programs made the cut: one was working with Habitat for Humanity and the second was to develop and implement a multi-media consumer marketing campaign to promote the use of a REALTOR®.

“We felt this provided a benefit not only to our members but also to the community and the clients we serve,” says Zarif.

Leadership and the association’s creative team focused the campaign message on educating consumers on the many roles REALTORS® play to serve their clients and communities from adviser and concierge to negotiator and advocate.

The television commercials debuted in June to wide member acclaim. Videos, social media, and print materials drive traffic back to the campaign microsite WhichRole.com.

Our Consumer Campaign: Using a REALTOR® should be a priority
Television ads and media appearances highlight REALTOR® value
It is inevitable in our line of work that we have had to explain to a friend or family member that not all real estate agents are REALTORS® and that the process of buying or selling property is actually much more complex than it looks on the internet or television. In a time when the DIY mentality reigns, the task of informing the public about the value of a REALTOR® is more important than ever.

At the San Antonio Board of REALTORS®, we use several platforms to spread this message to the public and help them understand why using a REALTOR® should be a priority. Through a strategic mix of paid advertising in print, online, and on television and efforts aimed at earning unpaid media mentions and features, our goal is to provide a convincing case for the REALTOR® value.

Our consumer outreach, which focuses mainly on why consumers should use a REALTOR®, began more than a decade ago, and today members view it as a core benefit that they receive from their association. We make sure they know about all of our efforts by giving them a monthly list of our media appearances and advertising buys.

Our most popular and successful outreach has been paid segments on local morning television talk shows. In these segments, we’re spokespeople, who are current association volunteer leaders, discuss buying and selling tips while emphasizing why a REALTOR® is a necessity in each step. These segments allow us to go in-depth on the REALTOR® value, but appear as interviews rather than sponsored content, which lends increased credibility. And since the segments are universal to REALTORS® and not specific to anyone, our members share these clips widely online as tools to market themselves.

Each of our paid efforts ends with a call for action to visit our consumer website at...
Four spokespeople are trained to highlight the SABOR.com to find a property and a consumers and members. Our digital ad us to have a continued presence in front of several magazines, are a staple and allow expectations, including the daily newspaper and print advertising, the campaign benefitted from the targeted postcard mailings, door-to-door C" campaign, referring to the ballot initiative ability, identify voters, and craft the campaign to consumers with a public awareness campaign that showed the negative impact the ordinance earlier this year, they reached out to consumers with a platform where consumers and members continue to have dedicated staff trained on the latest advocacy tools and can focus on messaging and targeting, with NAR managing the technology. All associations will have the option to contact NAR to set up a call for action on their behalf using this Advocacy Everywhere program, which features new technology and professional services from NAR. In early 2018, NAR will be transitioning from the current REALTOR® Party Hub to a more efficient and user-friendly system from VoterVoice. This will include a redesign of the REALTOR® Action Center website, which will launch by the end of 2017. One difference in the Advocacy Everywhere model is that state associations will continue to have direct access to the advocacy platform, but local associations will not, says Jim MacGregor, NAR’s managing director of communications and REALTOR® mobilization. “The decision to allocate these resources to only the state associations is based on an analysis of usage of our REALTOR® Party Hub system over the past six years as well as the cost of for these advocacy tools. “A plus is that local associations will no longer need to have dedicated staff trained on the latest advocacy tools and can focus on messaging and targeting, with NAR managing the technology. All associations will have the option to contact NAR to set up a call for action on their behalf using this Advocacy Everywhere model of concierge service model. State or local associations are responsible for the content of a CFA and which lawmakers will be targeted, but NAR will manage the technical work of setting up the letter the lawmakers receive, the email campaign, mobile alert, social media shares, and more. NAR will also give advice on best practices — those shortcuts to get your action rates up faster and other strategies to engage your membership along the way. “Our new Advocacy Everywhere initiative coupled with the Consumer Advocacy Outreach program gives every state and local association, regardless of their size or resources, the opportunity to mount effective consumer advocacy campaigns on issues that affect their communities,” says MacGregor. For more, visit realtoractioncenter.com/advocacyeverywhere and sign up to attend a webinar or training session.

Our Consumer Campaign: Helping New Yorkers achieve their dream of homeownership

Campaign to pass home savings bill passes with consumer support

New York is among the states that have reached out to consumers to get their support in establishing home buyer saving accounts. In New York, the legislation was called NY First Home and established a program whereby state residents could save for the down payment and closing costs of their first home purchase while receiving deductions of up to $5,000 per year ($10,000 for couples) based on those savings. “NY First Home will make homeownership more easily attainable by helping New Yorkers bridge the gap between where their savings are and where they need to be to receive the keys to their first home,” the New York Association of REALTORS® said in a statement. In 2017, the state association launched a campaign to pass the bill that included the website nyfirsthome.com, where members can learn about the program and consumers signed a form letter sent directly to their state representatives. Similar efforts are underway across the country and six states have passed first-time homebuyer savings account legislation.

In Mississippi the state association launched its successful campaign with a consumer website, firsthomeMS.org, featuring a clear argument for the consumer benefits of the program.

Get Consumers on Your Side

Two new initiatives from NAR make advocacy outreach easier

For your association’s advocacy efforts to be successful you need more than members on your side, you need consumers. When the North Bay Association of REALTORS® sought to defeat a rent control ordinance earlier this year, they reached out to consumers with a public awareness campaign that showed the negative impact the proposal would have on homeowners’ rights. Working in conjunction with the National Association of REALTORS® Campaign Services Team, which provided focus groups and polling to determine the campaign’s viability, identify voters, and craft the campaign messaging, North Bay launched the “No on C” campaign, referring to the ballot initiative known as Measure C. In addition to four targeted postcard mailings, door-to-door canvassers, and TV, radio, and online advertising, the campaign benefited from the support of the chamber of commerce and groups from across many local industries. The campaign’s website fairhousingforall.com was a central hub for consumer education materials. On June 6, the ordinance was defeated by 52 percent of the vote. State and local associations have, over the years, launched dozens of consumer-facing websites similar to fairhousingforall.com for all types of issue advocacy. But now, with the recent redesign and relaunch of HomeOwnershipMatters.realtor, every REALTOR® association has access to a customizable portal to house information and calls for action on local issues. HomeOwnershipMatters.realtor offers a platform where consumers and members can engage representatives on important homeowner and property issues and take immediate action easily. The Hawaii Association of REALTORS® was the first to capitalize on this new resource and reach out to thousands of state residents to return Home Rule, a local governance statement that would adversely affect private property rights. “Using the data from the Consumer Advocacy Database, we’ve been able to drill down and engage internet users who have already visited SABOR.com, searching with specific keywords that we have selected. Tracking impressions and click-through rates is instant, and we can adjust keywords and artwork mid-campaign as needed. These ads follow the users wherever they go online. Although we have found success with these platforms, we continuously evaluate how well each is working and where they falter. This allows us to determine whether we should scale back one method while amplifying another or add in a new platform or media partner altogether. By remaining nimble and flexible with our campaign, we expect this mix of digital, television, and print advertising to continue building the consumer impression of REALTOR® value in the San Antonio area and garnering further earned media attention for our message.

Consumer outreach: advocacy

Increasing consumer engagement in the REALTOR® organization’s political and legislative activity is one of the most immediate goals of the National Association of REALTORS®, CEO Bob Goldberg told the association leaders gathered at the 2017 Leadership Summit in Chicago. “There’s strength in numbers,” he said. “The more consumers we bring in, the more our voice is elevated.” REALTOR® associations at the state and local level have access to an abundance of resources from the National Association of REALTORS® to reach out to local voters for support on issues critical to ensuring property owner rights and maintaining livable communities nationwide.

The Hawaii Association of REALTORS®’ customized and branded page of HomeOwnershipMatters.realtor. in highly targeted social media campaigns, reaching voters we know are paying attention,” says Jon Broadbooks, Illinois REALTORS®’ director of communications. Another new NAR initiative to increase REALTOR® and consumer participation in calls for action is the Advocacy Everywhere program, which features new technology and new professional services from NAR. In early 2018, NAR will be transitioning from the current REALTOR® Party Hub to a more efficient and user-friendly system from VoterVoice. This will include a redesign of the REALTOR® Action Center website, which will launch by the end of 2017. One difference in the Advocacy Everywhere model is that state associations will continue to have direct access to the advocacy platform, but local associations will not, says Jim MacGregor, NAR’s managing director of communications and REALTOR® mobilization. “The decision to allocate these resources to only the state associations is based on an analysis of usage of our REALTOR® Party Hub system over the past six years as well as the cost of for these advocacy tools. “A plus is that local associations will no longer need to have dedicated staff trained on the latest advocacy tools and can focus on messaging and targeting, with NAR managing the technology. All associations will have the option to contact NAR to set up a call for action on their behalf using this Advocacy Everywhere model of concierge service model. State or local associations are responsible for the content of a CFA and which lawmakers will be targeted, but NAR will manage the technical work of setting up the letter the lawmakers receive, the email campaign, mobile alert, social media shares, and more. NAR will also give advice on best practices—those shortcuts to get your action rates up faster and other strategies to engage your membership along the way. “Our new Advocacy Everywhere initiative coupled with the Consumer Advocacy Outreach program gives every state and local association, regardless of their size or resources, the opportunity to mount effective consumer advocacy campaigns on issues that affect their communities,” says MacGregor. For more, visit realtoractioncenter.com/advocacyeverywhere and sign up to attend a webinar or training session.
Our Consumer Campaign: The Housing Translator
Explaining real estate market conditions in terms residents can understand

By Kailey Waring, marketing, communications and design manager, Seattle King County REALTORS®

“Complicated language, policy, and prices—our housing market can be confusing. But not when you have Seattle King County REALTORS® by your side. For over 200 years, REALTORS® have been passionate about creating healthy communities and a balanced housing market. We want to help you understand all the nitty-gritty, the nuances, and anything and everything you need (and didn’t realize you needed) to know about housing policy.”

The statement above is on the opening page of the HousingTranslator.com site, which is the cornerstone of our Housing Translator campaign, designed to reach out to consumers and demonstrate REALTORS® understanding of today’s complex real estate market. The goal of the campaign also is to position the association and its members as leaders in proposing solutions for those who desire to be homeowners in our region.

Here’s how it worked

The spark for Housing Translator came in June 2016 after our 22nd Annual Housing Issues Briefing. This special event is for state senators, state representatives, legislative assistants, and candidates for the state Senate and House. The event features experts and consultants’ take on the housing market, consumer preferences, and the policies that may be solutions to the vexing issues of affordability and supply. The information was so powerful and relevant, we knew we needed to share it with a wider audience.

First, the association developed a set of legislative principles and initiatives to correct the current housing shortage, which is the top challenge for our members and the clients they serve. This shortage of inventory manifests itself as ever-increasing home prices, multiple offers on existing homes, inflated offers on homes of marginal value, and accepted offers of sale tens of thousands of dollars above asking price. We felt this critical lack of supply must be addressed for consumers to view our housing market in a positive light.

One of the regulatory solutions we chose to advocate for: legalization of mother-in-law cottages and other accessory dwelling units, which prepares REALTOR® members to assist in our consumer outreach efforts, both in our posts so that members recognize them as those that are specifically designed for members to pass along to their consumer followers.

But now their new and extensive consumer-facing website (realdealoc.com) is set to broaden their reach. The site also explained the role and value of REALTORS®. The “For Real Estate Pros” section has information directly for members, while the rest of the easy-to-navigate site features in-depth information aimed to cement OCR as the source of housing information and advocacy in Orange County.

“The ‘For Real Estate Pros’ section has information directly for members, while the rest of the easy-to-navigate site features in-depth information aimed to cement OCR as the source of housing information and advocacy in Orange County. ‘We are planning on launching a print version that will primarily be for members to use in their firms, but we will also be sending it to our community partners and local elected officials’,” says Tony Capitelli, the association’s government affairs director.

Our Consumer Campaign: Orlando is a fabulous place to live
A REALTOR® is an invaluable resource and a trusted ally

Facebook posts boasting the vitality of Orlando and its housing market generate a tremendous amount of likes and shares among the members of the Orlando Regional REALTOR® Association. In fact, social media posts that get the greatest engagement are those that are specifically designed for members to pass along to their consumer followers.

“Market-related content and ‘Orlando is a fabulous place to live’ content are our best performers on social media,” says Lisa McDuffie, the association’s communications manager. “We almost always include some sort of Call Your REALTOR® language in our posts so that members recognize them as content to spread to consumers.”

The association’s social media materials, distributed on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and LinkedIn refer readers back to the association’s REALTOR®-branded, consumer-focused website, OrlandoRealtors.com, which also features a “Find a REALTOR®” member directory and houses a wealth of area market information for buyers, sellers, and renters.
Earn Positive Media Coverage, 101
Low-cost and free ways to communicate REALTOR® value to the press.

Media relations is one of the most valuable yet complex pursuits for any association, but it is especially challenging for small associations that don’t have a trained public relations professional on staff. In today’s multimedia, content-hungry environment, it’s critical to have the REALTOR® brand positively represented to elevate the value of REALTOR® to consumers.

Although the REALTOR® brand is promoted nationally via the National Association of REALTORS® consumer marketing campaigns and media appearances, reinforcement at the local and state levels campaigns and media appearances, bolster the image among local consumers. Despite how daunting a task this may seem, earning regular and positive media coverage is achievable with a solid game plan.

Local media needs have changed
Just sending data (such as home sale stats and metropolitan median home prices) to media outlets is no longer a viable value proposition for associations. Reporters and consumers can typically find this data online, so data without context is simply that—facts and figures.

What reporters need—and what newsrooms expect—are local stories that can count on you as a source for real estate information. You can take these story ideas and create content for your local newspaper, magazine, newsletter, blog, or social media accounts.

Journalists’ jobs have changed
Journalists wear multiple hats in today’s publishing environment. Rarely is a writer just a writer anymore. They’re also the researcher, the producer, and sometimes the videographer. As much information as you can provide media contacts to make their job easier, the more they will come to you for real estate coverage. Can you, the AE, provide them with a quick quote on the market? Can you provide a member to speak to them knowledgeably on a particular topic, such as commercial real estate or the mortgage interest deduction?

Be proactive and call or email your media outlets and offer to be a resource whenever they need it, even when there’s nothing in it for you. Over time, you will build a close relationship with the media, and they will know they can count on you as a source for real estate-related content and information.

Media relations tools you can use
There are multiple free or inexpensive web-based tools and apps that every local association should be using to monitor your local media. From a news release distribution perspective, consider using tools such as PRLog to send your press releases to main search engines and news aggregator sites where members of the media can pick them up.

Of course, forming personal relationships with local editors and reporters and sending personalized pitches to earn media coverage is your best option.

After you send a news release to the media, monitor media outlets and websites for proof of coverage. This can be done manually with some quick strategic keyword searches for the name of your association and scans of targeted media outlets. Why monitor coverage? First, to ensure that the story wasn’t misrepresented in the media; second, to track which outlets are receptive to your news release and you can target them directly in the future; and third, so you know what other companies or organizations are trying to influence home buyers or home sellers in your area. Don’t forget to include social media in your scanning efforts. Plus, setting up Google Alerts with keywords and people referenced in each release is a great timesaver. A quick search on the web will also provide several premium monitoring tools.

Give reporters original content
A strong original content strategy is very appealing in today’s content hungry environment. Do you have members who blog or post videos? Keep on top of their content to find any nuggets you can send to the media.

If you have the inclination, start an association blog where you can demonstrate your thought leadership on the local market and show the personal side of the association. Ask leaders and committee members to contribute to dive deep into the nuances within your communities and member- ship that makes your association unique. Published either on your own marketing platforms (website, blog, social media channels, YouTube channel) or through trade and industry publications, this content enables you to create connections with the media on a more personal level.

But where do you find these rich stories that are hiding among your membership? For starters, train your staff and leadership to keep their ears to the ground for personal interest stories. You also need to identify potential writers or speakers—those with a knack for and interest in writing or making videos. Next, you need to create opportun- ities to uncover stories—networking opportu- nities where members and stakeholders feel comfortable talking at leisure about their interests, passions, and recent accomplish- ments.

Another way is to survey members. Set up a simple five-question survey on your association’s Facebook or Twitter page and encourage members to respond. Find materials on the NAR Facebook page (@NARdodRealtor) and follow NAR on Twitter at @NARMedia. Sharable videos are also at nar.realtor/videos/housing-monthly and NAR’s YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/NARMedia.

NAR Resources Help Associations Reach Out to Their Local Press

Real Estate Story Ideas:
These housing and real estate story ideas are frequently updated at nar.realtor/ and designed to help media generate content for news stories. You can take these story ideas and create content for your local newspaper, magazine, newsletters, blogs, and websites.

Social Media Sharable Materials:
Repost NAR’s social media materials and videos on your association’s Facebook or Twitter page and encourage members to add the local perspective. Find materials on the NAR Facebook page (@NARdodRealtor) and follow NAR on Twitter at @NARMedia. Shareable videos are also at nar.realtor/videos/housing-monthly and NAR’s YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/NARMedia.

Blog Articles to Share and Inspire:
NAR hosts eight blogs covering specific aspects of real estate from staging and technology to international and commercial. Share these blog posts with your local media and offer the local perspective along with members ready to be interviewed (blogs, realtor.org).

News Releases:
NAR’s press releases can also generate great local story ideas (nar.realtor/news-releases).
Forge Genuine Relationships, Make Strong Connections

How you can recognize and cultivate intangible skills to be a better AE.

There is no doubt you need people skills to do your job. Whether it’s building working relationships with leaders who are very different from you or uniting volunteers to achieve a particular task, AEs need to know how to work with people.

That brings us to this column, the third in a series exploring the intangible skills great CEOs possess. Of the 10 intangible skills identified in my study earlier this year, there are five pairs that are mirror images and may be exhibited differently by two CEOs, depending on their personality or style. In this issue, I discuss the intangible skill pair of relationships and connections.

Everyone wants to be the CEO whom everybody likes and respects. But how do you get there?

What is the skill of relationships?
CEOs with the ability to foster relationships can connect with a variety of personalities in different situations and establish a positive personal or working environment. It’s often called “people skills.” These CEOs make an impact through other individuals.

The skill mentioned most often when associations search for new CEOs is relationships; in other words, it’s the ability to work with all types of people in virtually any situation. Among the intangible skills AEs desire, relationships is at the top of the list. Everyone wants to be a CEO whom everybody likes and respects. But how do you get there?

High-performing CEOs with this skill engage people actively and build friendships with intent. Relationship-focused CEOs enjoy the process of getting to know people, and the more complicated the personality, the more challenging (and rewarding) the ensuing friendship. These CEOs strive to establish positive, professional, and lasting bonds with virtually everyone they meet.

Develop better relationships

One approach to developing better relationships is to focus your conversations on the other person. In other words, you should feel good about themselves. This is especially useful with association leaders when discussions are on challenging issues. Rob Authier, CEO of the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®, has the skill of relationships. “When I have an issue to discuss with Rob, he listens intently and then proposes alternatives,” one of his association leaders said. “We come to a consensus. Regardless of the issue—even if it is contentious—I always feel good after talking to him.”

People like Authier who have this skill find something genuinely like about each member—even those that get on their nerves. Certainly, members come with a wide variety of temperaments; but successful CEOs look for the positive, the admirable, or the trait they have in common with the member and focus on that.

Begin by getting to know members through research and personal conversations, such as by asking about their business, family, and interests to uncover points of commonality. There are sites online to conduct personal research, but nothing has more impact than direct conversation.

Take the long-term view

Although volunteers and leaders often think in the short term regarding their relationship with the association (such as the few years of volunteering or the one year of presidency), CEOs take the long view. They know patience usually is more productive than quick decisions. So, they work with leaders as they are ascending through positions of responsibility to build deep and lasting relationships.

According to Travis Kessler, CEO of the Texas Association of REALTORS®: “There must be a desire for common ground and goals. This means adapting and learning new ways, but the reward of flexibility is immense.” This echoes sentiment of other successful CEOs: Relationships change over time, but if built on listening and consensus, the bond will strengthen. This is most valuable in times of stress or confrontation.

Start with small steps

A simple but effective way to grow your people skills is to be available. Take member calls and have daily in-person contact with others. Make eye contact as you engage others and meet everyone with a smile. Learn members’ names and use them often in conversations.

For positive relationships to move the association forward it can’t be the CEO alone who practices good people skills. Successful CEOs prioritize and institutionalize relationship-building by ensuring that staff know and practice basic techniques, including clear instructions on appropriate relationships and confidentiality, and even formal policies, such as always having a person answer the phone. The devil is in the details if necessary on ways staff can enhance relationships with members, leaders, and others contacting the association.

What is the skill of connections?

CEOs with the ability to build a network of people to accomplish specific goals are said to have “connections.” They are people with influential personal contacts throughout an organization or industry. Unlike the hundreds or thousands of LinkedIn connections you may have, these connections are a group of trusted individuals that the successful CEO deploys to accomplish a result. Connections are not technology-based. They are not social media friends. They are human-to-human, genuine, and personal.

Many CEOs view them as extensions of themselves. Of the intangible skills, “connections” has the greatest reach.

Leverage multiple networks

Successful REALTOR® association CEOs have fine-tuned connections within the real estate industry. The purpose is to accurately and deeply know the “real world” of the real estate business and become the expert.

Connected CEOs create multiple networks and have connections in the extended real estate world such as homeowners, chambers of commerce, economic development entities, and financial institutions. Some CEOs have groups without any discernible connection with real estate or association management. They find that this involvement heightens their creativity and awareness. As one said, “It gives me new antennas.”

How to build connections

Start honing your connection skills by building a network of REALTOR® leaders you work with every year. Focus on advancing the interests of a leader can strengthen this network. Enable leaders to recognize their own particular skills and ability.

When considering connections, do not neglect the strength of the REALTOR® organization and its natural interconnectivity. Top CEOs not only leverage the REALTOR® three-level cooperative arrangement but also support it. If there are problems at any level, they seek to be part of the answer.

Take connections seriously

Average CEOs may comment that the relationship skill is a natural part of being an executive. But highly successful CEOs are more serious about their connections. They focus on an area and even specific individuals to include in their network. It’s more intentional than making friends.

These CEOs also know it must be a mutually beneficial relationship. They must contribute in order to acquire. Create your own group based upon your interests and needs. Building inside the REALTOR® organization enhances your career, but building outside it enhances you.

How to Acquire Intangible Skills

Set out to cultivate these intangible skills in the same way you’d learn a language or another hard skill, such as event planning or financials.

• Contact a successful CEO who has that skill and seek advice.
• Request a successful CEO mentor or formally coach you.
• Search the business literature, carefully noting the corporate view bias.
• Search business videos; TED talks are particularly valuable.
• Attend AEI, ASAE, and other executive education events.
• Consider local university advanced management programs.
• At education events, focus on personal contacts with successful CEOs and not just course content.
• Join or create peer networks of like-minded executives.
REALTOR® associations and members should be aware of a growing legal threat from unscrupulous law firms hoping to cash in on the federal government’s delay in issuing final rules for how to make websites accessible to Americans with disabilities. NAR has learned of real estate brokerages receiving threatening letters claiming that their websites are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The law firms that filed the suit often say they would be willing to settle the matter for a small fee.

According to the National Law Review, the number of lawsuits complaining that business websites are not accessible to impaired users is on the rise. REALTOR® associations operate websites and so could face these allegations even though the courts are split on whether websites currently need to be accessible to people with disabilities.

In a letter to the Department of Justice last year, NAR offered its support for the adoption of clear website accessibility standards and requirements. That letter also urged the agency to expedite its rulemaking on this issue since the lack of clear rules has contributed to a growing number of lawsuits. The DOJ, however, has recently “deprioritized” this rulemaking, meaning that clarity on this issue is not likely to come anytime soon.

Here’s where the courts stand today on compliance

Because websites did not exist when the ADA was enacted, website accessibility is not addressed in the statute, and so whether website operators need to comply with the ADA remains an open issue. Two federal courts have recently considered whether the ADA applies to websites and came to different conclusions, showing how this issue remains an unsettled area of the law.

California court says no requirement to comply

In Robles v. Domino’s Pizza, a California federal court ruled that the pizza chain was not required to comply with website accessibility guidelines because the U.S. Department of Justice has failed to issue clear guidance on the accessibility requirements. However, the department has, in some cases, required website operators to comply with an international accessibility standard called the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

The lawsuit filed against Domino’s alleged that its website, dominos.com, violated the ADA because it prevented individuals who used screen-reading devices from making purchases and failed to comply with the international guidelines. After the lawsuit was filed, dominos.com began referring people who had trouble accessing the site to a 24-hour phone number. The court commented that the website user had failed to demonstrate why the 24-hour phone number did not constitute a reasonable accommodation under the ADA.

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Two federal courts have recently considered whether the ADA applies to websites and came to different conclusions, showing how this issue remains an unsettled area of the law.

Florida court orders website operator to follow web accessibility guidelines
A Florida federal court, meanwhile, ruled that a grocery chain’s website violated the ADA and ordered the website operator to conform the site to the international guidelines. In this case, Gil v. Winn-Dixie Stores, the court found that disabled individuals were unable to download coupons, order prescriptions, or find store locations on the website even with screen-reading software. Unlike the Domino’s Pizza site, there was no phone assistance that could help with these functions.

The court ruled that the ADA required the site to be accessible because the site was “heavily integrated” into the owner’s store locations and operated as a “gateway” to the stores. The court stated that it was not ruling that the ADA required websites to be accessible to disabled individuals, but ADA required accessibility in this instance because of the site’s integration into its physical stores.

As these cases show, the law regarding the ADA’s application to websites remains unclear and attorneys are capitalizing on this uncertainty. In fact, the ADA allows anyone to file an accessibility lawsuit. Plaaintiffs are not required to make prior demands to a business before filing suit, and there’s no requirement that the plaintiff be a patron of the business.

How you can protect your association
The good news is that you can protect your association by adding a statement to your website that provides a contact phone number for anyone having difficulty accessing it (see NAR’s statement at nar.realtor/accessibility). Although it’s no guarantee that you won’t become the target of an ADA noncompliance threat, offering some accommodation for disabled users on your site makes it more likely that the lawsuit mills will move on to easier targets.

Next, talk to your website provider about implementing a plan for making your site compliant with WCAG 2.0. Even though compliance may not be the law yet, it is coming, so now is the time to prepare.

To find out where your website stands on compliance, run an accessibility scan of the webpages using a free online tool, such as wave.webaim.org. The report will show areas of the webpage that may not be accessible and recommend a solution. Keep records of your ongoing efforts in pursuit of accessibility and prioritize any content accessibility violations.

If you’re planning a website redesign or upgrade, choose a vendor that can create compliant pages.

Additionally, associations should follow the progress of the DOJ rulemaking, as eventually it will issue guidance for ADA website compliance.

Talk to your members about ADA compliance
REALTORS® typically have an abundance of contact information on their websites and may prefer that home buyers and sellers phone them to explore listings and selling strategies. Nevertheless, it’s in members’ best interest to also post a clear accessibility statement offering direct assistance to anyone unable to take advantage of the services, including home search, offered on their websites.

Penning legislation aims to curb ADA-related lawsuits
Lawmakers in both the Senate and House proposed legislation called the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017 to reduce the number of lawsuits filed by requiring plaintiffs to give businesses written notice of the alleged violations and an opportunity to address them before filing suit. The legislation stalled in Congress but is expected to gain new momentum with the current administration. Opponents of the measure say it would create new hurdles for citizen enforcement of the Act and weaken its effectiveness.

More Resources
The National Association of REALTORS® provides up-to-date resources on complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at nar.realtor.
Work-Life Balance in the Eye of the Beholder

“Far and away, the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.” —Theodore Roosevelt

This quote sums up how work-life balance can pose a particular challenge for REALTOR® AEs. We are presented daily with the opportunity to work hard at work worth doing, which tempts us to do so well past the posted office hours.

We serve an entrepreneurial industry of type-A personalities who work evenings, weekends, and holidays. On top of that, many of us have an organizational mission to engage and serve the greater community as well. It’s rare that I have an evening when I don’t check email, or a weekend when I unplug entirely. In my interpretation of balance, that’s OK.

“My approach to cultivating balance has been to take a big-picture view. Balance is not something I can measure by a single day, week, or month.”

Tessa Hults, RCE, CAE, is the CEO of the Raleigh Regional Assoc. of REALTORS® and Triangle MLS in N.C. Reach her at TessaH@RRAR.com or 919-229-4953.

Work hard, play hard

Balancing the scales with a purpose-driven profession on one side means acknowledging that the job I love requires a lot of time, energy, and creative resources. Countering this to attain a happy, well-balanced life means using some of the same amount of energy and creativity into my personal pursuits. It, too, takes strategy and planning.

One of the most effective planning tools I have to create balance in my life is the annual work calendar. Looking at the annual association/MLS calendars of events and meetings gives me a pretty good idea of what the year will look like in terms of when I might be donating more of those bonus hours. I can identify the pressure points in the coming year, when time will be short and tensions will run high, and begin to sow the seeds of balance by carving out necessary times around those white-knuckle days to tend to my personal priorities. Sometimes just knowing that relief is around the corner can help me through some of the more challenging moments. When balance is a challenge in my life today, it means that busy calendars probably are too, so I set these days aside for myself early each year when meetings and commitments fill the spaces in my schedule.

As small as it may seem, strategically planting these calm spaces or thrilling adventures into my calendar and allowing myself to refocus my time and attention on my personal life when it is needed most can shift the balance of an entire year from feeling like an occasional runaway train to being poised to bring my best self to both work and home, consistently.

For me, a few chapters of a good book serve as a daily microvacation, and weekly enrichment classes help me achieve personal goals that keep me from slipping into a work-home-work routine. A few times each year, I get together with amazing friends to take on new adventures. These take a day or two but give us fresh new perspectives that endure. The key really is as simple as doing things you enjoy most.

I know work-life balance articles tend to focus on enriching the life side of the equation, but it benefits the work side, too. A happy employee, no matter what your job title, is a more engaged and productive employee. So the good news is that I know the time I take to do the things that matter can really be chalked up as an investment in helping the association be successful.

Work worth doing really is a wonderful thing, but so are lives worth living—so get out there and enjoy the best of both.
Build an Impact Beyond Your Association

Rebecca Grossman on leading the AEC and being a community influencer.

Your 2018 AE Committee chair, Rebecca Grossman, RCE, GREEN, CEO of the Scottsdale Area Association of REALTORS® in Arizona, has a full plate of AE projects and programs to foster in the upcoming year. Yet her main focus, she says, is to continue the work of the REALTOR® Association Collaboration Work Group charged with finding ways to identify and overcome issues hindering effective relationships among local, state, and national associations. “I’m very excited about the great minds that we have pulled together to really take a deep dive into how we can all be stronger through collaboration,” she says.

It will be a busy year for Grossman, who already leads one of the most progressive associations in the country. RAE spoke recently with this dynamic CEO about consumer outreach and other matters near to her heart.

What consumer outreach does your association conduct and why?

We recently participated in a segment on buying versus renting for the Fox News show “Property Man.” It was a great opportunity to show the expertise of some of our members and to speak about the importance of using a REALTOR®. Anytime you are contacted by TV, radio, or news, my advice is to always say yes. You can figure out the details later, but if you hesitate, they will move on to the next call. You can always find a member who can speak on the topic, whatever it is, and I’ve never had anyone complain about who we chose to put in front of the camera. We make sure they are prepared and that they are speaking on behalf of the association and the industry.

You’re involved with your city’s chamber of commerce and other groups. How does this benefit your association?

Until you have one-on-one conversations with community leaders and businesses, they cannot possibly understand what REALTORS® are all about. The connections I’ve made through the chamber and Envision Scottsdale, Scottsdale Citizens for Today and Tomorrow, and Scottsdale Leadership have been extremely powerful for our association because now these influential groups know who we are and how much we care about the economic vitality, sustainability, and environmental health of our communities. I am a true believer in getting out of the office and engaging with those who may be able to help us the next time we’re fighting a sign ordinance or advocating for infrastructure improvements. I know it’s hard, because we AEs have so much going on in running our associations and dealing with the next staff or volunteer crisis. But getting involved in community leadership is a must in our business if we want to ensure that our members have a healthy market to practice in.

What is the biggest challenge facing your association today?

Reaching members has become more difficult in recent years. Some of the large brokerage firms have powerful filters on their email servers that push association emails into orbit. Today we have to rely more on social media, face-to-face meetings, and phone calls to rise above the fray. Recently, we had only 500 out of 8,200 primary members respond to our sign ordinance call to action. I don’t know what the answer is, but one of the things that we are doing is getting out and telling the story of our association’s value as much as possible. My communications staff put together a slick presentation about how we were able to turn the tide on an egregious sign ordinance and achieve a huge win for our members by working the well-oiled system that the REALTORS® have created over the years. Now we have to take that presentation and dog-and-pony it in person until we drop. That is the best way I can see to show member benefit in a tangible, meaningful way.

Why is the GREEN designation important to you personally?

I achieved my GREEN designation early after it was first developed. I’ve always been interested in a more sustainable future, and I think REALTORS® are in a great position to educate the public on healthy homes and energy conservation and efficiency. Although I don’t teach the GREEN designation class anymore, I’ve found that having the designation and the expertise has helped me engage in important community dialogue, bring sustainability education to our area, and promote important green data fields in our MLSs. GREEN is a great opportunity for members to add more value to the transaction. For AEs, the designation reflects on your association and positions it as a stakeholder and influencer in the local sustainability discussion.
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