

REALTOR[®] AE

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL FOR REALTOR[®] ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES • FALL 2012



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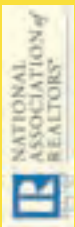
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Cover image by Nick Rotondo, ©2012.

Our Young Members Are Our Future



Ginger Downs, RCE, CAE, is CEO of the Chicago Association of REALTORS®. Contact her at 312-214-5516 or gdowns@chicagorealtor.com.

If you've attended one of NAR's REThink the Future of Real Estate events, or even if you've just heard about them, you're probably as convinced as I that our industry's future hinges on successfully engaging and harnessing the power of our younger members.

We in the real estate industry have long recognized a generation gap in key areas of our members' businesses, such as their preferred method of client communications (phone or text?) and how they view their roles as trusted adviser. To keep the REALTOR® brand relevant in years ahead, the time to nurture younger members and invite them to the leadership table is at hand. We need to hear from this faction of our membership—and we need to hear from it now. What younger REALTORS® are experiencing and the challenges they are facing are likely predictors of what our entire industry will confront tomorrow. Why be reactive when we can prepare to lead the change?

For many associations, the REALTORS® Young Professionals Network provides a valuable catalyst for inviting younger REALTORS® to engage. What's essential to a successful YPN chapter is encouraging it to be as organic as possible: built to reflect its own members' interests in education, networking, and other activities. The goal is to create a hothouse in which your YPN members can generate and act upon their own creative ideas within an environment of professionalism and respect. The end result, ideally, will be long-lasting bonds with one another and the

emergence of young leaders who are confident in their abilities and ready to move up a level to take charge with their fresh ideas.

Support your younger members who demonstrate an interest in getting involved. Budget funds for a leadership training workshop, perhaps, or offer individuals distinct roles in shepherding a program or project.

Consider this carefully now, before a new fiscal year begins. What can you do to capitalize on your best and brightest younger members? How can you encourage them to help lead the way? How can you help your younger members authentically connect with one another? Through younger members, we can see the future that's almost here.

As we enter a new year, I would like to offer sincere thanks for the privilege of serving as your Association Executives Committee chair. I'd like to acknowledge the great work of my vice chair, Mark Allen, of the Minneapolis Area Association of REALTORS®, and NAR staff executive Cindy Sampalis. Your many hours of dedicated effort are truly noticed, are much appreciated, and make a difference. Thanks, too, to the rest of the Association Leadership Development team for your volunteer spirit, and to all of this year's workgroup volunteers. I look forward to seeing you all in November and to working together in the future.

Respectfully,
Ginger Downs

MORE ONLINE

Visit the AE Committee page at REALTOR.org for more on AEC activities in 2012.



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REALTOR AE magazine



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Young AEs Unite to Promote Participation

Since the launch of the AE Young Professionals Network in 2010, many AEs under 40 say they have been inspired to participate more at the national level.

Inspired by the success of the REALTOR® Young Professionals Network, younger association executives formed the AE YPN in to encourage younger AEs and staff to not only step up and voice their ideas and opinions, but also take an active role in shaping discussions and direction within the AE community.

The AE YPN aims to ensure that younger AEs have an opportunity to contribute their unique and innovative perspective on today's association challenges at the national level.

"Although I've been involved with other work groups at the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, AE YPN has definitely served as an entry point to being more than just a participant, and encouraged me to assume a leadership role," says Clint Skutchan, chief executive officer and director of REALTOR® and consumer advocacy for the Ft. Collins Board of REALTORS®, Colo.

Through AE YPN, younger AEs have an opportunity to contribute their unique and innovative perspective on today's association challenges at the national level.

"AE YPN's goals are to help younger AEs stay connected and engaged with the national association and have their voices heard on a variety of issues," says Courtney Wilson, NAR's staff liaison to the AE YPN group.

Encouraging association staff to pursue

a career in REALTOR® association management is another goal of the AE YPN.

"After attending my first AE YPN meeting in Washington D.C., I learned how the AE YPN could help me shape my career and future goals," says 22-year-old Melissa A. Piccinich, administrative and communications coordinator for the Eastern Bergen County Board of REALTORS®. "This group has nurtured my sense of creativity related to member engagement and communications and increased my interest in RPAC and legislative issues," she adds.

Technology is naturally the hot topic at the AE YPN networking sessions, held three times a year at NAR meetings, and the AE Institute. The AE YPN holds quarterly conference calls to share ideas and updates with AE peers around the country.

"Beyond the opportunity to prove yourself as a viable young leader, I think the relationship-building opportunities with others from around the country who share similar experiences has been vital," notes Skutchan.

The group also serves in a liaison capacity to the REALTOR® YPN group and supports the local YPN chapter initiative.

Those who think there's nothing to learn from AEs under 35 would be wrong, cautions Skutchan. "I think our biggest attributes are the energy and creativity we bring to our positions. Young AEs are often less prone to succumb to the that's-the-way-we've-always-done-it mentality. Hopefully our ability to see past that barrier and bring different approaches to association problems is something that can benefit every AE facing the continual challenge of redefining the REALTOR® association's value proposition."

To stay updated on events and news about the AE YPN, join the Facebook group. All AEs and staff are welcome to attend the AE YPN meet-up in Orlando, Nov. 10, during the REALTORS® Conference & Expo. ■



RPR Rolls Out to All NAR Members

Beginning Nov. 1, all NAR members will have access to the Realtors Property Resource® as a membership benefit. RPR® is the largest comprehensive database of parcel-centric property information in the industry, aggregating hundreds of datasets covering assessor, recorder, and mortgage data, foreclosure information, demographics, neighborhood data, school data, and more on more than 147 million properties. Its mission is to provide REALTORS® with advanced technology tools and features needed to provide their clients and customers with dynamic reports and analytics which can assist them in making better informed decisions when buying or selling properties. RPR is a wholly owned subsidiary corporation of NAR.

A variety of resources are available to associations to promote RPR to members, including webinars and instructors who can lead member training and certify your staff to teach RPR courses at your association or in brokerage offices. There are also weekly webinar training sessions offered online and the RPR Customer Care Center open 24/7 at 877-977-7576. Many states have approved an RPR continuing education course that allows REALTORS® to receive 3 CE credits for taking a 3 hour RPR training class. To see if your state offers this course, or to attend an online training session, visit <http://blog.narrpr.com/training/learn-rpr/>.

Members who are not already RPR users and association staff can register for an RPR account starting Nov. 1 at www.narrpr.com. ■



Portland Debuts New Sustainability Resource Web Site

Portland, Ore., ranks among the country's most sustainable cities because its inhabitants take green living seriously. From urban gardening spaces to recycling programs to energy-efficient homes, environmental consciousness ranks high among home buyers, too. That's why the Portland Metropolitan Association of REALTORS® launched a new section of its Web site devoted to informa-

tion on sustainable home improvement projects, sustainable preservation, federal and state tax credits for green projects, and Sustainability 101 primer, including a glossary of terms. The association recently undertook an audit of its own business practices and made changes, which earned it the City of Portland Silver Sustainability at Work certification. For more, visit www.pmar.org/green. ■



A home for sale in Ajijic, Mexico. Photo source: www.focusonmexico.com

Real Estate Associations from Texas and Mexico Form Cross-Border Partnership

The Texas Association of REALTORS® signed an agreement with La Asociación Mexicana de Profesionales Inmobiliarios, Mexico's real estate association, in October to collaborate in real estate throughout the region. The partnership will enable practitioners on both sides of the border to help clients purchase homes in either country by sharing information, marketing techniques, educational content, and best practices.

"In recent years, we've seen increasing interest in cross-border real estate opportunities, both Mexicans purchasing property here in the U.S. and Americans purchasing property in Mexico," said Joe Stewart, 2012 chairman of the Texas Association of REALTORS®, in the *Amarillo Globe-News*.

The agreement encompasses 12 other REALTOR® associations in Texas towns, including Austin, Brownsville, Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio.

Real estate south of the border continues to attract American retirees looking to make the most of their savings, as well as manufacturers turned off by rising labor costs in China. According to a recent report on CNBC.com, Mexico rode out the worldwide economic downturn better than many other countries and its real estate market never suffered on the same level as that of the United States. And although there was excess inventory, that is quickly being snatched up by bargain hunters from both sides of the border. ■



Members Raise Funds for REALTOR® Foundation

The 2012 San Mateo County Association of REALTORS®, Calif., annual charity spaghetti feed auction and raffle raised \$18,000 to benefit housing-related initiatives throughout San Mateo County through its charitable foundation. More than 200 members with their families enjoyed an evening of mingling, bidding in a silent auction, and a scrumptious spaghetti dinner at the Peninsula Italian American Social Club.

Join REALTOR® Ring Day

This holiday season, nearly 100 REALTOR® associations will be supporting the Salvation Army through REALTOR® Ring Day, Friday, Dec. 7.

The idea to hold REALTOR® Ring Day came from a member in Fargo, N.D., who wanted to give real estate professionals an opportunity to support a cause familiar to them: housing. The Salvation Army was the perfect fit because it offers so many housing-related programs.

For more information on how your association can get involved, contact your local Salvation Army branch through www.ringbells.org. ■



Briefing

LOCAL, STATE, NATIONAL PROGRAMS

NAR's MVP Program Expands to AEs

The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® popular Member Value Plus Program, which rewards members with free products and discounts for taking specific actions—such as registering for webinars or completing online surveys—is now available to associations and association executives. Similar to the member version of the program, the AE version rewards AEs who complete a specified NAR action. Rewards include free eProducts, discounted products, course discounts, and stipends. For example, in September the action request was to post the MVP widget on your association's Web site and the reward



was a free download of the Social Media for REALTORS® Series VIP 4 Pack. A new MVP for AEs action and reward is available online on the first day of every month. "Active involvement is the best way to maximize membership value, as well as the best way to make the association and all our members more successful," says Bob Goldberg, NAR's senior vice president of marketing, business development, and commercial services. "And those who take the most active role are rewarded with resources that can continue to strengthen their own business and associations." For more information, visit REALTOR.org/MVP/AE. ■



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NAR Partners with Sprint


Special deals on wireless phone services and accessories have been a top-requested member benefit that NAR has just secured with new REALTOR Benefits® Program partner Sprint. Through the new Sprint Discount Program, NAR members can save 18 percent on select wireless monthly service plans and 20 percent on select accessories. This offer is also available to existing Sprint customers who wish to convert to the NAR program, which they can do, free of charge, when they sign a new two-year service contract or add an additional line to their existing account. All NAR members, including association staff who have individual NRDS IDs, are eligible to take advantage of this offer. For specific instructions you can use in your promotions to your members, visit REALTOR.org/Sprint.

Experience REALTOR.org's Renovations



The October revamp of REALTOR.org enables members and AEs to customize the news they see on the home page by their role in real estate, such as association executive, as well as their particular interests, such as technology or political advocacy. The site also senses the type of device with which visitors access and changes dynamically according to the device's screen size, from smartphones and tablets to display monitors.

New REALTOR® Association Speakers Bureau Offers Discounts



The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® new Signature Series Speakers Bureau offers REALTOR® associations and commercial overlay boards access to expert speakers and trainers who have reduced their fees. NAR's goal is to assist in providing affordable, quality education for members at the state and local level. Speakers can also design a program to meet the specific needs of your audience. Visit the online database of speakers to find experts on topics from marketing and social media to strategic planning and leadership development. Each speaker bio lists their fees, course descriptions, and areas of expertise. For more information, visit REALTOR.org/SigSeries. To apply to be listed in this speakers bureau, contact Jean Maday at jmaday@realtors.org.

AE Committee to Launch AE Mentor Program

The Mentor Program, launching soon, will allow AEs to connect with other, more seasoned AEs for guidance, advice, and support—whether they are new to the REALTOR® association management business or are simply experiencing challenges. The program will work through a national database that categorizes available mentors according to their location, demographics, and demonstrated skill set. The work group developed screening questions that AEs will answer, through the database, to automatically match them with possible mentors. The work group is currently reviewing guidelines that outline a mentor's responsibilities, including the time commitment, methods of communication, and overall role of the AE mentor. Association and Leadership Development staff is currently working with NAR's IT staff to develop the database.

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For questions contact:

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NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION of
REALTORS®

Briefing

EVENTS, TECHNOLOGY

Follow the REALTORS® Conference Live Online

Nov. 9 through Nov. 12, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® conference live Web site (REALTOR.org/ConferenceLive) offers news, social networking buzz, attendee commentary, speaker interviews, and trade show footage for REALTOR® Conference & Expo attendees and those who are unable to attend the Orlando gathering. Post a link

to the site on your association's home page to keep members updated. Right now at the site, you can enter to win a free trip to San Francisco for the 2013 REALTOR® Conference & Expo or one of three full conference registrations to next year's event. For event schedules, hotel information, special event registration, and speakers, visit REALTOR.org/events. ■



AE Events at National Conference



More than 18,000 members and guests are expected to attend the REALTORS® Conference & Expo in sunny Orlando, Fla., November 9–12. The education and motivational offerings at the gathering are designed to help REALTORS® make the most of the current market and gain an edge over the competition. There's also plenty of programming just for AEs, including these highlights:

- **Strategic Planning Idea Exchange**, 8:30–10:30 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 8.
- **Legal Education Seminar for State Association & Local Board Counsel** (ticketed event), 8:30 a.m.–12 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 8.
- **RAMCO Demonstration**, 9–11 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 8.
- **Communication Directors Institute** (advance enrollment required, ticketed event), 9 a.m.–4 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 8.
- **59 1/2 Minutes: A Member & Director Update**, 4–4:59 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 8.
- **Inaugural Gala** (Ticketed Event), 6:30–11 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 8.
- **Federal Issues Update**, 7:30–8:30 a.m., Friday, Nov. 9.
- **Association Executives Committee/Forum**, 9–11 a.m., Friday, Nov. 9.
- **Multiple Listing Issues and Policies Committee/Forum**, 9 a.m.–12 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10.
- **AE YPN Meet-Up**, 2–3:45 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10.
- **Association Management Roundtables**, 9–11 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 11.
- **Board of Directors meeting**, 8:30–11:30 a.m., Monday, Nov. 12.
- **Delegate Body Meeting**, 1–2:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 12.

For a complete schedule, visit REALTOR.org/conference.

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Briefing

NAR, SOCIAL MEDIA

NAR's New Social Pros Aim to Work with AEs, Too

The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® recently expanded its communication team by hiring two new social media experts: Heather Elias as director of social business practice and Nobu Hata as director of digital engagement. These two former practitioners represent the latest



NOBU HATA

step NAR is taking to expand its use of social media from a focus on communication between the organization and its members to a focus on helping members communicate with consumers. Although the bulk of their work will be member-focused, they are committed to helping state and local associations advance their use of effective social media tools. *RAE* asked Elias and Hata just what type of advice and support AEs can expect from them.

Q. How will you be helping state and local associations grow their knowledge and expertise in social media and member engagement?

Nobu: As an agent, speaker, educator, and volunteer leader at the local and national levels preceding my NAR hire, I'm in a pretty unique position to have the insight needed to help connect the online world to associations' real-world initiatives; and it's in the real world where I'll have to start. Whether at local or state association events, or AEI, I imagine I'll be doing a lot of real-life, offline interaction about these subjects and I'm excited about that! Making things "real" and humanizing online presence was a key to my success in all facets of the industry beforehand, and it's those stories and insights I want to share. I suspect I'll be on

the road a lot, but it's definitely something I'm looking forward to. E-mail would be the best place to get a hold of me—*nbata@realtors.org*. Feel free to brain-dump on me there, everyone!

Heather: Although my role at NAR will be more internal—helping coordinate social media efforts across the organization—I will work in conjunction with Nobu to bring information on our best practices, policies, and training efforts to the state and local level. We hope associations can learn from our research and successes (and misfires) to find ideas that will work for them.

Q. Some REALTOR® associations are striving for increased digital engagement with members, while others don't see it as a priority. What do you say to associations that haven't moved beyond a monthly e-newsletter?

Nobu: Almost any form of digital engagement is a must-have in an association's

outreach plan. At the core of NAR's new "social business" plan is the move from engagement to real-world action. It's all about helping associations get to know their people first, then figuring out what makes them tick, then finding the content or calls-to-action to get them to act—passive e-newsletters don't do that. Although associations might not use all the tools available to them in the social media realm, or use them all successfully, helping them figure out which ones to focus on will be one of my primary goals. That's the beauty of new media: It's so customizable, depending on the user and the audience its use is aimed at. It's unique and local—just like real estate, right?



HEATHER ELIAS

Q. For local and state REALTOR® associations keen on expanding their social engagement efforts, but that have little staff, time, or money to devote to it, what key area do you feel is most important?

Heather: The first step any association can take toward social engagement is to listen to its members: find out where members are and set up a system to monitor, ask questions, and listen. Then move in the direction your members are leading you. For some associations, that may be training members in social media practices; for other associations, it may be something else entirely. One of social media's greatest benefits is the ability to listen in on what your audience is passionate about, struggling with, or just talking about on a day-to-day basis. ■

"Although associations might not use all the tools available to them in the social media realm, or use them all successfully, helping them figure which ones to focus on will be one of my primary goals."

—Nobu Hata

My REALTOR® Party

By Holly Moskerintz, Community & Political Affairs Representative, NAR

Champion Community Workforce Housing

The REALTOR® Party Initiative is more than campaigns and political advocacy. It helps REALTOR® associations take the lead in assisting working families with affordable housing.

Much of the workforce today cannot afford to live in the communities in which they work, or even in a nearby safe, desirable neighborhood. This includes the people who provide vital services to a community—teachers, firefighters, police officers, and health workers. Shortages of affordable housing choices close to where families work can lead to longer commutes, sprawl, and traffic congestion that degrade the quality of life for all residents.

Funding is available for REALTOR® associations to hold forums and invite community stakeholders to identify local housing needs. Forum discussions generally include the effect a lack of affordable housing has on communities, as well as strategies and programs to mitigate those effects. The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® provides financial resources, including housing opportunity grants, plus technical assistance, so that state and local REALTOR® associations can plan, organize, and host forums in their communities.

Association-sponsored housing forums provide unique opportunities to bring REALTORS® together with regional, state, local, and nonprofit housing leaders; local and county governments; financial leaders; lenders; developers; and the business community to connect and explore opportunities to address workforce housing challenges in their communities.

Associations can choose to hold an all-day forum that focuses on broad workforce housing issues or a two- to three-hour forum that focuses on a specific solution, such as employer-assisted housing (EAH). Organizing such a forum can be part of an association's employer-assisted housing program strategy as detailed in NAR's online guide *Employer-Assisted Housing Initiative Guide for State & Local REAL-*

TOR® Associations at REALTOR.org.

The success of both national and regional workforce housing forums in the past four years has enabled NAR to provide state and local associations with practical, step-by-step methods to ensure effective programs locally.

The Missoula Organization of REALTORS®, Mont., is one of those success stories. In 2009, when the Missoula REALTORS® produced a housing report showing that the city's average four-person family could not afford to purchase a home within the city limits, Mayor John Engen made affordable housing one of his campaign priorities. The Missoula association and its CEO, Ruth Link, also stepped up to the plate and helped the mayor with his initiative, providing a real turning point in the working relationship between the REALTORS® and local government. "This allowed the local government and the REALTORS® to come together, when we had so often been at odds," says Link.

Just two years later, in 2011, MOR's Missoula Housing Report noted that the city's average four-person family could now afford a home within Missoula. "The affordability gap has been narrowed as the economy recovers," says Link, "and at the end of the day, REALTORS® have a strong and healthy working relationship with the mayor, which is good for all of us."

If your association is interested in organizing a workforce or employer-assisted housing forum, NAR can help. Visit Realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/

housing-opportunity or contact the NAR Housing Opportunity staff: Lora McCray, lmccray@realtors.org; Holly Moskerintz, hmoskerintz@realtors.org; or Wendy Penn (Housing Opportunity Grants), wpenn@realtors.org. ■



Workforce Housing Resources on
REALTORActionCenter.com

Workforce Housing Forum Guide: A Strategy for Outreach and Advocacy
Outlines how to plan and conduct a workforce housing forum to identify and develop strategies to address a community's workforce housing needs.

Employer-Assisted Housing Initiative Guide for State & Local REALTOR® Associations
Provides a road map for associations to plan and implement an EAH initiative to increase affordable housing opportunities.

Making Affordable Housing Work: The Housing Opportunity Toolkit
A collection of resources for REALTORS® and associations. Includes helpful tips and suggestions for associations looking to improve their housing opportunity programs.

Housing Opportunity Grant
Supports the efforts of state and local associations that are implementing affordable housing programs and initiatives.

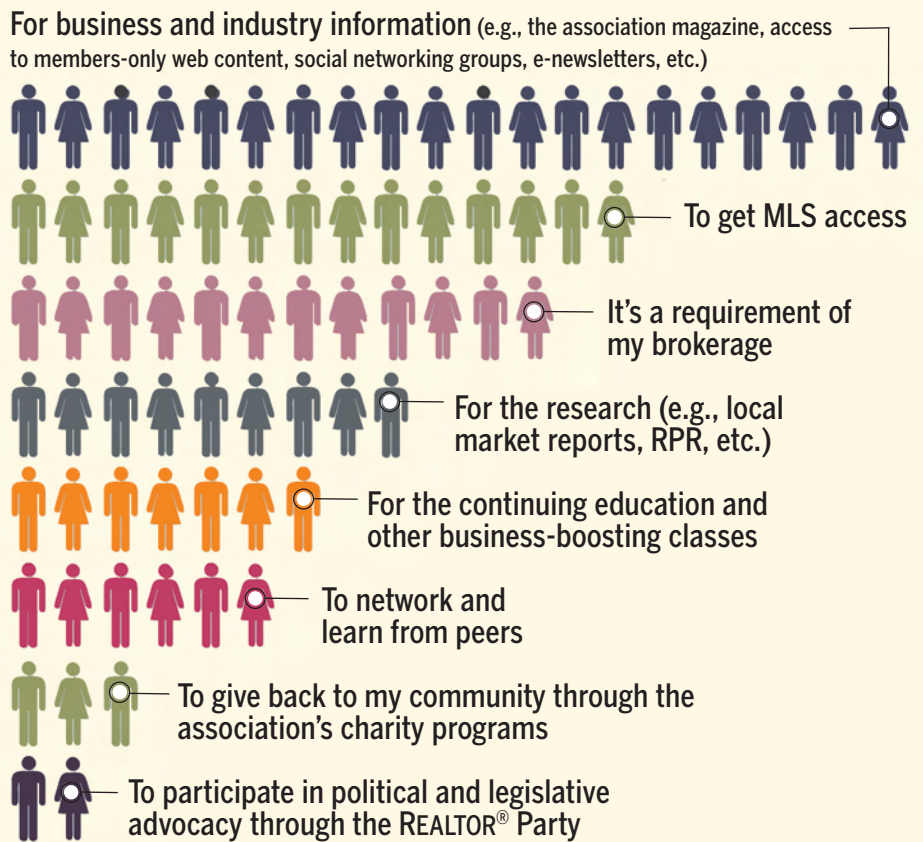
Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH) and Expanding Housing Opportunities classes (EOH)
REALTOR.org/eahclass and REALTOR.org/ehoclass

WHAT YOUNG MEMBERS WANT

If you want to know what your young members want, ask them. REALTOR® AE magazine's August survey of nearly 200 REALTORS® under 40 from across the country found that they have a wealth of opinions about what their associations should offer. They have creative ideas to improve participation and efficiency. And they want to be involved. But nearly 20 percent say their association's volunteer and leadership opportunities are not open equally to members of all ages.

Young members' ability to find a voice and a place in the REALTOR® organization has been facilitated in the past five years largely by the formation of Young Professional Networks, now in more than 200 associations and at the national level. Young professionals want technology, they want convenience, they want business expertise, and they want to be respected for their contributions, regardless of their age.

Why are you a REALTOR® association member? (rank these 7 reasons)



What's the value of your YPN?

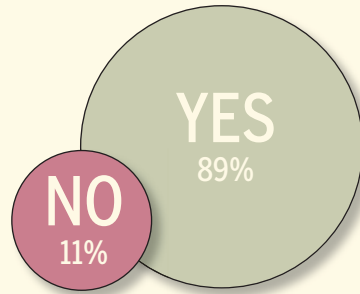
My involvement in the YPN plays a significant role in my professional life.
—say 44% of survey respondents

I participate in the YPN because it hosts good events and useful education.
—say 35% of survey respondents

If we no longer had a YPN, my participation level would remain the same.
—say 21% of survey respondents

Do YPNs boost participation?

Do you agree that YPNs are a means by which younger REALTORS® are becoming more involved in contributing to the association as a whole (volunteering, serving on committees, etc.)?

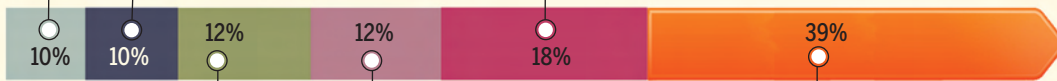


Why do you belong to your Young Professionals Network?

To meet other young, single professionals in a social setting.

Other. See p. 12.

As an entry point to future association volunteer and leadership opportunities.



To swap stories and share experiences with others new to the business who face similar issues so I feel I'm not alone.

To participate in the association in a meaningful way even though I may not have the expertise yet to contribute to other association committees.

For the education and business resources geared toward younger practitioners so I can get a leg up in the industry.

How do younger REALTORS® differ from older REALTORS®?

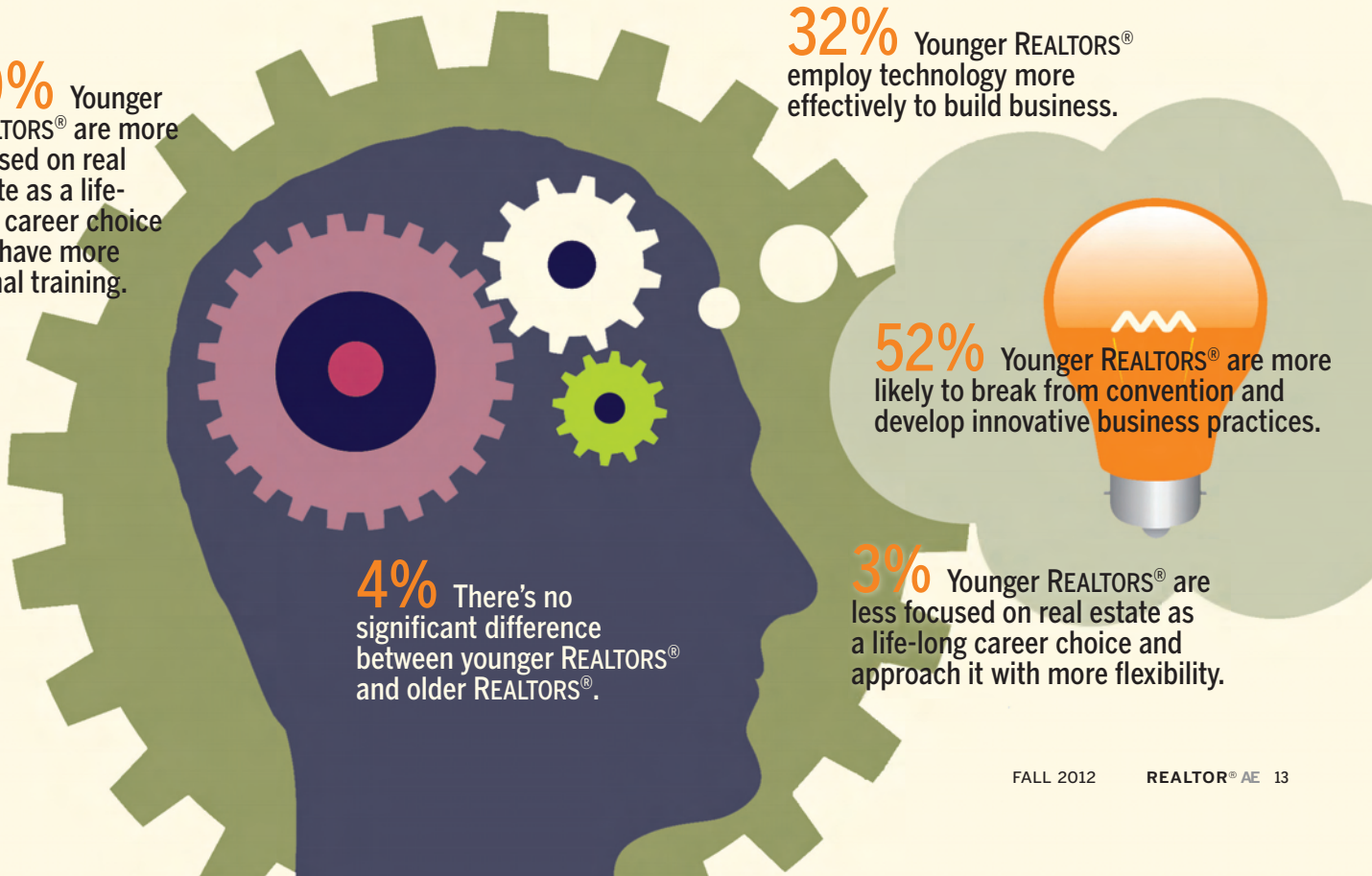
10% Younger REALTORS® are more focused on real estate as a life-long career choice and have more formal training.

32% Younger REALTORS® employ technology more effectively to build business.

52% Younger REALTORS® are more likely to break from convention and develop innovative business practices.

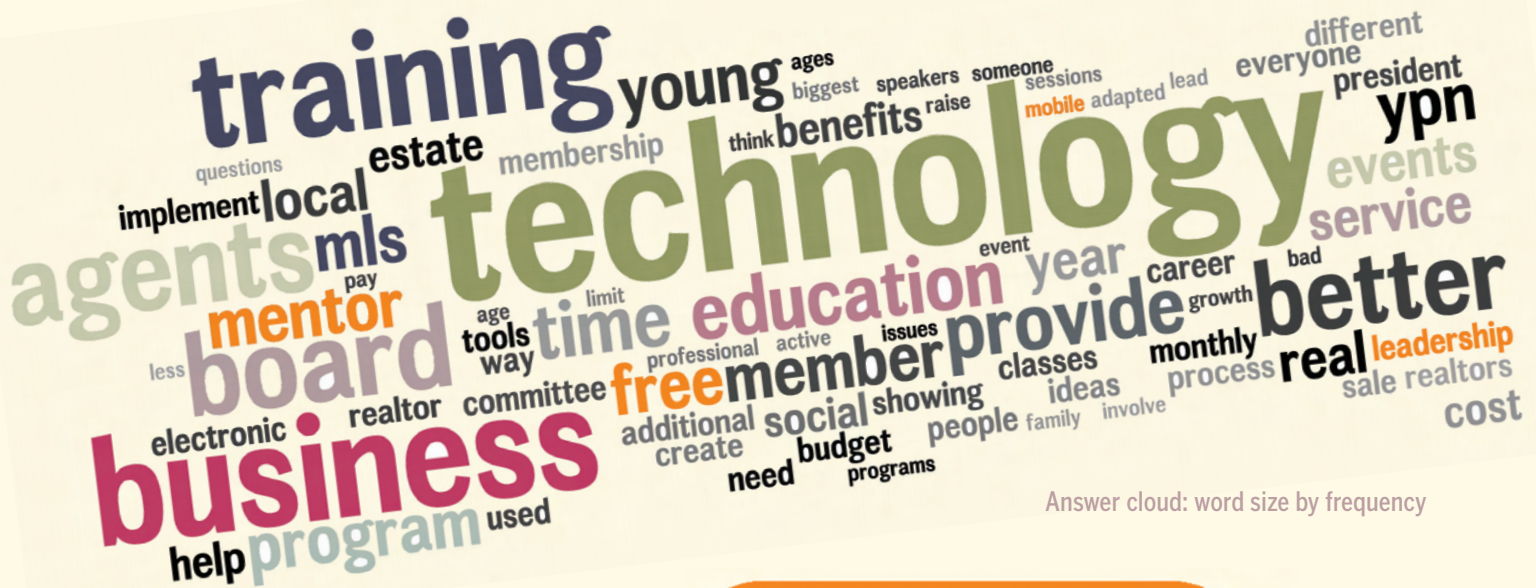
4% There's no significant difference between younger REALTORS® and older REALTORS®.

3% Younger REALTORS® are less focused on real estate as a life-long career choice and approach it with more flexibility.



What's on your program wish list?

If you were president of your local association in 2013 and could institute any program or service to benefit members (no staff or budget constraints), what would it be?



Answer cloud: word size by frequency

“I would create a program where first-year dues are free to recent college grads or military returning from service who participate on a committee.”

“I would employ a team to go to all real estate offices and have intensive training on the benefits and tools from the local, state, and national association. I think there are untapped resources members aren't aware of.”

If I were association president ...

“I'd have staff to produce neighborhood market reports for comparing historic and current data so I can show customers which areas retain value, have the best prices, or are selling fastest.”

“I'd create a mentor program. We can go to a million classes but you will never truly learn how to be an excellent real estate professional unless you get hands-on experience and encouragement. As it is now, members over 40 won't even network with younger members.”

“I'd develop an incentive program where members would earn dollars to redeem for board events and classes for every year of active service on a committee or in a leadership position.”

What do you **WANT** from your association and what **VALUE** do you get now?

Read all 198 responses and ideas online.

We want the chance to be more involved in decisions made by our local board in various areas, MLS system, community campaigns, and outreach programs. The value we do get is a supportive local associations staff.

REALTOR® associations provide many benefits that we overlook as go-getters. It's easy to say dues are just the cost of doing business. However, at my board there are many benefits that we are not even aware of.

We want a voice. In our association the CEO and staff are in total control of everyone. They pick who they want on the association board, and the members never get a say. They keep older agents who have no clue of the current market in the leadership positions.

Until very recently I think the

associations catered to their biggest audience—the 55+ club. YPN has created enough of a positive buzz on a national level that now the locals are getting younger REALTORS® involved in association activities, boards, and committees. Gen Y wants to contribute and thankfully locals are seeing this as a good thing (finally)!

Access! Access to participate fully in all levels of the industry. There have always been young REALTORS®; it is only recently that they have begun to speak with a common voice.

In my experience as my association's YPN chair this year, I know our younger members do not feel welcome. Even as we try to suggest more involvement in committees outside of our YPN, the resistance is there. I hope that one day this will not be the case. Our current president is a strong advocate for having

the younger members more involved; we just have to get them to see they're welcome.

Iwould love our association to have a "best practices" program to help agents help each other get better. We could encourage agents to respond to colleagues, give feedback from showings, and communicate more freely.

Iwant my local association to shave back the amount of money we raise and donate. It is a strain on the few volunteers and seems to be becoming less effective.

As agents, we are all faced with information overload. Specifically as a newer agent, I'd appreciate any guidance in navigating the information, identifying the best tools (and their practical applications), and adopting best business practices to pave the way for long term success. ■





11 WAYS TO ATTRACT Younger Members

by Holly Duckworth

Have you ever asked yourself, “How can I attract younger professionals to the industry, and what can I do to get them involved?”

As an association consultant, I hear it all the time lately. Here’s my answer: Although elusive, younger members have not gone anywhere. They are sitting at their desks, working hard to keep their jobs. In some cases they are in libraries and home offices in search of the perfect job. Others are still in college, hoping the economy will turn around so they will have a job. In addition to job stability, young professionals are looking for something we are all looking for: a sense of purpose and belonging. This is exactly what you can give them.

Here are 11 things you can do to recruit, retain, and maintain younger professionals into your organization.

1. Co-create the association experience with them

Younger members generally don’t like being told what to do and

how to act. Allow younger members to lead. Work with a few key existing younger volunteers and ask them how they want to interface with your association. Then work with them to create a member value program that may look a little different than it did a few years ago. As an association, be willing to let go of programs that will not serve your new dynamic and energetic membership.

2. Go social and create a place for conversation

Association executives must realize that although younger members do love technology, what they specifically love is the 24/7 access to your association that technology enables. Build programs that blend together the power of technology and the power of the personal. This means social networking online and, sometimes, in person.

For example, the National Speakers Association (www.nsa)

speaker.org) has a group called XY that has become the avenue by which members representing the X and Y generations can engage in online and, occasionally, face-to-face conversations relevant to speakers in the business. The entire program is led by key volunteers who liaison with association staff. Many younger members of the Speakers Association will tell you the number-one value they get from membership is not at the local chapter or even national; it comes from the 24/7 access they get to like-minded professionals in the XY Facebook group and the face-to-face gatherings of this unique population of younger speakers.

3. Keep it simple and fresh

Often more senior association executives believe they must have an elaborate campaign to recruit younger members. That may not be the case. The key to success is shorter messages, in the spirit of Twitter's 140-character limit, that facilitate an ongoing dialogue. Don't just spout out your value proposition over and over; instead create opportunities for young professionals to interact with you.

4. Raise awareness of your purpose and mission

At the St. Louis airport, Rotary International signs pepper the walls. For this network of 34,000 community-based service clubs, Rotary's ads feature young members who are spending time helping others, not wasting time in an airport. What a brilliant use of traditional media and an interesting way to recruit younger members. Rotary knows that younger professionals are often the ones in the most travel-intensive roles and are sitting in airports often longing for the connection of other like-minded professionals. Find the unique places your younger members frequent, and develop a plan to market to them there.

5. Provide amazing content geared to younger professionals

Aside from attracting young real estate professionals to the association, why not start earlier and attract young professionals to real estate? Take a cue from the Indiana Association for Home & Hospice Care, the voice of Indiana's home care providers. They launched an intensive two-day classroom experience called Home Care 101, directed at people interested in starting home care agencies. The tuition was applied to the first year of association membership, bringing new blood into the organization.

6. Recognize young members

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers established a young engineers chapter to help recognize, support, and promote the participation of young professional members. Any current member who is 35 years or younger is automatically considered a young engineers chapter member and encouraged to participate in leadership programs and networking. By getting involved now, these younger members are more likely to remain active in the industry, and to become successful and influential leaders.

7. Get involved at high schools and universities

More colleges and universities in the United States offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in real estate than ever before. As many associations have found, students can be a dynamic and influential membership segment. For example, in the past 12 years, the American Health Information Management Association's student membership has grown from 5,000 to more than 17,000 students. The association recognizes that today's student members are the future leaders of both the profession and the association. The association's new student advisory councils work to promote the development of student membership at campuses across the country and add to the educational experience, not only by generating enthusiasm about the industry, but also by providing a forum in which students can gather, share ideas, and connect to the profession outside of their mandatory coursework.

8. Offer sage advice and mentoring

Sometimes to get younger members involved, you have to get older members involved. Mentor match making between seasoned pros and less experienced members is a powerful draw. One-on-one advice from seasoned industry veterans is one of your association's most valuable assets, and you can offer it to newer members for free.

For example, the Incentive Research Foundation posts online audio recordings of members answering an important industry-related question. The recordings are two to three minutes long and can be shared on all social media, with a "contact me" option. This not only showcases the deep pool of wisdom among the foundation's seasoned membership, but also opens a dialogue between prospective and current members.

9. Give a break on the dues

When students and younger members are entering a profession, many of them are earning low incomes, closing fewer sales, and just learning to be responsible for the bills of daily life. Consider building stair-step membership pricing that allows your members to integrate dues into their financial plans.

10. Be casual and fun

To keep members engaged, you need to be a place not only for work, but for fun as well. Many associations are adding in after-hours networking so that young single members can get to know each other. Also try family events where members can bring their kids and spouses. Charity events, too, can be fun as well as productive.

11. Establish a personal connection

I am a member of five associations. When I think about which associations I've chosen to join, it's always the ones that asked me what I want. It's the ones that presented what they could offer in a simple and affordable way. Provide relevant content and tell me how it will advance my career, and you've got a member for life. ■

Holly Duckworth, CAE, CMP, founded Leadership Solutions International (leadershipsolutionsintl.com), which provides speaking, coaching, and training for organizations worldwide on the future of effective leadership and volunteerism.



LAUNCH

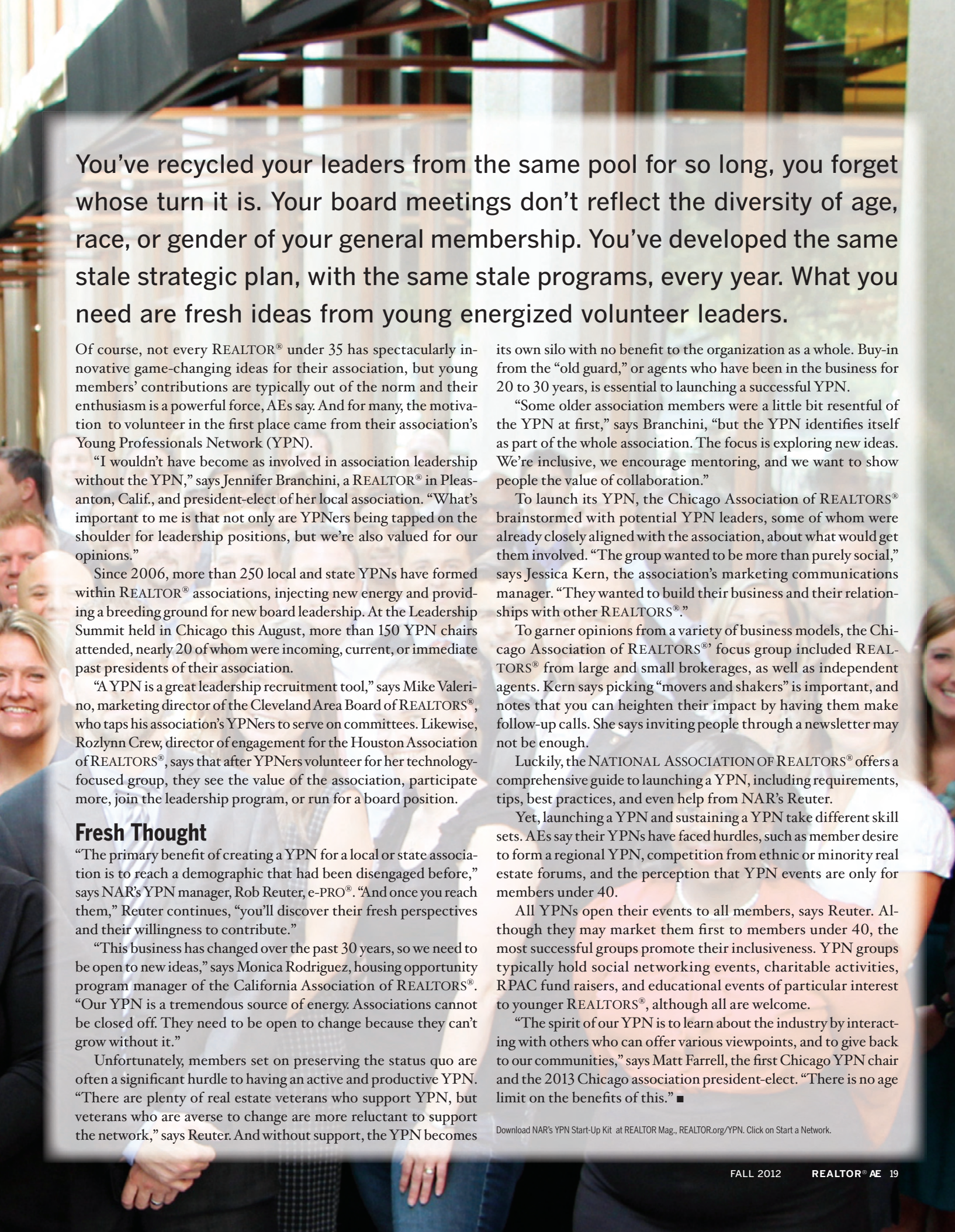
the power of a great
young professionals network

YPN

by Michele Lerner

More than 150 YPN chairs attended the Leadership Summit in Chicago in August. Nearly 20 were incoming, current, or immediate past presidents of their association.

Photo by Brian Copeland, REALTOR®, Nashville, Tenn.



You've recycled your leaders from the same pool for so long, you forget whose turn it is. Your board meetings don't reflect the diversity of age, race, or gender of your general membership. You've developed the same stale strategic plan, with the same stale programs, every year. What you need are fresh ideas from young energized volunteer leaders.

Of course, not every REALTOR® under 35 has spectacularly innovative game-changing ideas for their association, but young members' contributions are typically out of the norm and their enthusiasm is a powerful force, AEs say. And for many, the motivation to volunteer in the first place came from their association's Young Professionals Network (YPN).

"I wouldn't have become as involved in association leadership without the YPN," says Jennifer Branchini, a REALTOR® in Pleasanton, Calif., and president-elect of her local association. "What's important to me is that not only are YPNers being tapped on the shoulder for leadership positions, but we're also valued for our opinions."

Since 2006, more than 250 local and state YPNs have formed within REALTOR® associations, injecting new energy and providing a breeding ground for new board leadership. At the Leadership Summit held in Chicago this August, more than 150 YPN chairs attended, nearly 20 of whom were incoming, current, or immediate past presidents of their association.

"A YPN is a great leadership recruitment tool," says Mike Valerino, marketing director of the Cleveland Area Board of REALTORS®, who taps his association's YPNers to serve on committees. Likewise, Rozlynn Crew, director of engagement for the Houston Association of REALTORS®, says that after YPNers volunteer for her technology-focused group, they see the value of the association, participate more, join the leadership program, or run for a board position.

Fresh Thought

"The primary benefit of creating a YPN for a local or state association is to reach a demographic that had been disengaged before," says NAR's YPN manager, Rob Reuter, e-PRO®. "And once you reach them," Reuter continues, "you'll discover their fresh perspectives and their willingness to contribute."

"This business has changed over the past 30 years, so we need to be open to new ideas," says Monica Rodriguez, housing opportunity program manager of the California Association of REALTORS®. "Our YPN is a tremendous source of energy. Associations cannot be closed off. They need to be open to change because they can't grow without it."

Unfortunately, members set on preserving the status quo are often a significant hurdle to having an active and productive YPN. "There are plenty of real estate veterans who support YPN, but veterans who are averse to change are more reluctant to support the network," says Reuter. And without support, the YPN becomes

its own silo with no benefit to the organization as a whole. Buy-in from the "old guard," or agents who have been in the business for 20 to 30 years, is essential to launching a successful YPN.

"Some older association members were a little bit resentful of the YPN at first," says Branchini, "but the YPN identifies itself as part of the whole association. The focus is exploring new ideas. We're inclusive, we encourage mentoring, and we want to show people the value of collaboration."

To launch its YPN, the Chicago Association of REALTORS® brainstormed with potential YPN leaders, some of whom were already closely aligned with the association, about what would get them involved. "The group wanted to be more than purely social," says Jessica Kern, the association's marketing communications manager. "They wanted to build their business and their relationships with other REALTORS®."

To garner opinions from a variety of business models, the Chicago Association of REALTORS® focus group included REALTORS® from large and small brokerages, as well as independent agents. Kern says picking "movers and shakers" is important, and notes that you can heighten their impact by having them make follow-up calls. She says inviting people through a newsletter may not be enough.

Luckily, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® offers a comprehensive guide to launching a YPN, including requirements, tips, best practices, and even help from NAR's Reuter.

Yet, launching a YPN and sustaining a YPN take different skill sets. AEs say their YPNs have faced hurdles, such as member desire to form a regional YPN, competition from ethnic or minority real estate forums, and the perception that YPN events are only for members under 40.

All YPNs open their events to all members, says Reuter. Although they may market them first to members under 40, the most successful groups promote their inclusiveness. YPN groups typically hold social networking events, charitable activities, RPAC fund raisers, and educational events of particular interest to younger REALTORS®, although all are welcome.

"The spirit of our YPN is to learn about the industry by interacting with others who can offer various viewpoints, and to give back to our communities," says Matt Farrell, the first Chicago YPN chair and the 2013 Chicago association president-elect. "There is no age limit on the benefits of this." ■

Download NAR's YPN Start-Up Kit at REALTOR Mag., REALTOR.org/YPN. Click on Start a Network.



Don't Just Communicate, **CREATE** a **DIALOGUE** with Social Media

by Carolyn Schwaar

Communicating with members via social media is commonplace among REALTOR® associations. The challenge now, association executives say, is to turn that typically one-way communication into two-way engagement.

Engagement is the Holy Grail of social media: A two-way relationship means members are truly interested—and invested—in what you offer.

Members who interact with your association online often increase their participation offline: joining committees, staffing work groups, attending events, and purchasing products. Online engagement also generates member feedback, which can help you with assessment, planning, and resource allocation, and with staying tuned in to member trends.


Engagement campaigns require staff time and budget dollars (although usually more of the former than the latter), and the pay-

off can take awhile to build. But association executives, especially communication directors, say the effort is not only worth it but essential if your goal is to keep up with members.

How do you define success?

Successful social media use was difficult to define until recently, and associations are defining their success in a variety of ways according to the goals they've set for their social media engagement efforts.

Google Analytics is an easy way to measure how much traffic is being referred to your Web site from the various social channels. This tool can also help you monitor unique page views, time on



page, and total pages viewed for each piece of content you create. Other social media analytic tools, such as Sprout Social, aggregate your activity into one easy-to-view dashboard where you can see if your strategy is moving in the right direction.

Another way to measure or justify your social engagement activities is to go through your social space mentions and tag them as positive, neutral, or negative. Add up the totals and measure over time. If the good mentions are growing, then your strategy is working.

“We measure social media success by the number of Facebook postings, YouTube views, shares, retweets, bitly link clicks, sellout events, smiling faces, proud board members, and whatever else we can track,” says Greg Sax, director of communications and product development at the Minneapolis Area Association of REALTORS®. After all, the ability to measure engagement is key to proving its value.

One example of Minneapolis’ social media marketing success is its monthly market videos, which are posted on YouTube. The association staff “shares the heck out of them via Facebook, Twitter, good old e-mail, and the like, and watches as members promote them farther,” says Sax. In addition to an average of 1,000 views per video, often the association receives requests from both members and nonmembers who want custom videos made for them. “Now it’s become a tidy product all its own, giving our association that coveted non-dues revenue we all crave and love.”

During the national association’s midyear meetings, the Bay East Association of REALTORS®, Calif., engaged a small group of correspondents (NAR directors, local officers, and staff) to bring news from Washington, D.C., back home to members via the association’s Facebook page. “I would post news throughout the day as it was happening, and our Facebook metrics skyrocketed during that week,” says Joe Smith, the association’s communication coordinator. Member posts generated from the news feed increased 35 percent and the association saw a 45 percent increase in online engagement (likes, comments, click-throughs). “This response from our followers reminded our leadership of the power of our social media sites and strengthened their commitment to these communication channels.”

Promotions can draw people in . . .

Social media engagement runs on some of the same principles as traditional marketing: attract participation with coupons, deals, and prizes, or just make it fun.

At the Memphis Area Association of REALTORS®, boosting event participation started with a contest to win a Kodak digital camera. The goal of the contest was to attract members to Member Appreciation Week events, but it also increased the association’s social media following. And, of course, with more followers there’s a wider audience for the next promotion.

“In all of the marketing for the event, I encouraged members to take photos and post them to our Facebook page to be entered to win the camera,” says Katie Shotts, marketing and events manager.

Members were then asked to vote for their favorite photo; the one with the most votes won. A few members began posting on their personal pages every day, asking their friends to vote for their photo. “Our reach was off the charts during that time, and it was a ton of fun watching it unfold and seeing how much the members were enjoying it. We all know how much people like seeing photos, and this was the jackpot!” Shotts says. The winning photo received 233 votes and 43 shares.

To promote attendance at another event, Shotts tweeted a secret word and only those members who told event staff the secret word could be entered into an iPad drawing. “Each day I would tweet something like, ‘Today’s secret word is professionalism. Get an extra drawing entry!’” says Shotts. “We gained 30 new MAAR member followers on Twitter in those five days, including the person who ended up winning the tablet.”

Long Island Association of REALTORS®, N.Y., Electronic Communication Specialist Sathya Bridgemohansingh recently used Twitter to promote discount codes for association products and services to boost event attendance during Member Appreciation Week. “If someone commented or ‘liked’ us on Facebook, they’d get special offers too,” she says. The result was increased participation over the previous years and more member followers on Twitter.

Using the popular “events” feature on Facebook helped Michaela Mitchell, communications director at the Emerald Coast Association of REALTORS®, Fla., generate increased attendance at her events. “Members can sign up for events right on Facebook instead of replying to an e-mail or registering on the association site,” she says. Even though Mitchell has to then manually register members from the Facebook list, she says the member convenience and the 10 to 15 percent increase in attendance makes it worthwhile.

. . . But valuable content makes them stay

While social media can increase attendance at live events, it can also facilitate an active online community where members can create buzz and participate virtually. “During our two major annual events, our education conference and tech fair, we encourage our attendees not only to follow us on Twitter, but to use hashtags so that their tweets will populate our event website,” says Bridgemohansingh. “Those who can’t make the events love the live feed of photos and comments. Many comment and engage online. It’s really great.”

Associations are finding that engaging members with social media via special offers, contests, live-event coverage, provocative questions, and insightful information sharing builds a following for association information of all kinds and boosts member involvement in the association as a whole.

In fact, there’s an entire industry focused on helping organizations leverage the power of social media to turn tweets and “likes” into real-world action. From attending events and buying products to volunteering and pressing for grassroots political change, getting members to act may soon depend on the effectiveness of your association’s social engagement strategy. ■

Take Orientations Online

Like it or not, there are members who don't want to meet you or set foot in your office. It's not personal. Like many young people today, they just prefer to do everything online.

Although your association's new member orientation is a cherished opportunity to connect in person and distill the value of membership, in the interest of accommodating members' needs, you may want to consider establishing a virtual orientation, at least as an option to a live, face-to-face presentation.

But that's the way we've always done it

So when did good old-fashioned meet 'n greets become, well, old-fashioned? Colleges and universities first flocked to the use of virtual new student orientations to accommodate their Web-savvy students' preferred learning style. Membership organizations soon followed suit.

The Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants boasts an informative and interactive webinar orientation that members can take from their office or at home. The American Society for Testing and Materials' new member orientation and training consists of a downloadable PowerPoint tour of

online electronic tools that facilitate member participation "from any place, at any time." The society also offers 12 to 15 live online webinar orientations a year with online registration, and an accompanying downloadable PDF kit.

Among REALTOR® associations, entirely virtual new member orientations aren't common, but many incorporate virtual elements into their orientations. For instance, many associations direct new members to view the 18-minute NAR new member orientation video online (REALTOR.org/videos/new-member-orientation-video/new-member-orientation-video), which covers member benefits and resources, advocacy, and more from the national perspective. NAR materials are also available on the CD inside the New Member Orientation Toolkit that's mailed to all associations every year. And associations can direct members to NAR's online ethics course for that part of the new member training requirement.

Several associations are following NAR's lead. The

Imagine agents participating in REALTOR® association new member orientations virtually.



The Long Island Board of REALTORS®' \$25 online orientation is approved for 3.75 hours of New York state continuing education credits and satisfies the NAR ethics-training requirement.

Wisconsin Association of REALTORS®, for example, has produced and posted its own online membership benefit videos that are used not only to attract members and orient new members, but also to promote membership value to existing members (see www.wra.org/Resources/Video_Center/WRA_Member_Benefits_Video).

Supplementing, not supplanting

It's not just about replacing in-person services with virtual ones. Online technology lends itself perfectly to enhancing live interactions. Marc Lebowitz, CEO of the Ada County Association of REALTORS®, Utah, supplements his live monthly new member session with a Skype call to the NAR Information Central. "Basically, Marc tells us when he is holding a new member orientation and we await the video call from him on Skype," says Mary Martinez-Garcia, NAR's library manager. "He turns his webcam toward the audience so we can see each other and I, or one of the other librarians, do a 10-minute show about the library, Information Central, REALTOR.org resources, and member benefits through NAR, then we leave a few minutes for questions."

"Virtual" can also mean "flexible"

When a new member simply can't make it into the office for orientation, AEs strive to be accommodating. "I've completed two orientations by conference and webinar," says Carol Platt, AE of the Osceola County Association of REALTORS®, Fla. "I've used Skype to communicate, plus the online videos on the NAR Web site for all of the segments of a new member orientation. We can't see the member watch the videos, so we allot time and then ask a few questions that they would only know if they watched it." Platt's association has members from 54 countries who are often traveling or living much of the year out of the country, she says, so a fully virtual orientation curriculum is on her to-do list.

No doubt when she does get to creating that curriculum, Platt will look to the trail-blazing 20,000-member Long Island Board of REALTORS®, with its entirely online new agent orientation, for inspiration. Launched in 2007, the course offers new REALTORS® the flexibility to work through the material at their own pace from their home or office (www.lirealtor.com/education/new_agent_orientation

[.aspx](#)). LIBOR's virtual orientation program consists of two parts: the association benefits and MLS orientation in slide-show format, and the Code Of Ethics training, which was produced by an online education vendor. Both parts must be completed to satisfy the association's new agent orientation requirement. The MLS segment of the online orientation provides members with industry case scenarios of specific situations and how to resolve them. The MLS rules book and forms are available online to print. This \$25 online orientation is approved for 3.75 hours of New York state continuing education credit and satisfies the NAR ethics-training requirement. LIBOR also offers a free face-to-face orientation and still encourages members who opt for the online version to visit the office and meet the association staff. According to MaryAnn Monteleone, LIBOR's VP of professional development, about half of new members take the virtual version of orientation, which is reviewed and updated annually.

Going virtual

The cost and technological hurdles of producing and posting orientation videos and courses, or hosting webinars, have undoubtedly stalled association development of virtual orientations, but there are cost-effective solutions, including free and low-cost online presentation tools (SlideRocket, Empress, Google Docs) and webinar services (Microsoft Office Live Meeting, Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro, Web-Ex, Freebinar).

Before you begin, check your bylaws, which may need to be amended or changed to allow for an orientation that is not in person.

NAR has no specific requirements about what must be included in a new member orientation, other than with respect to the Code of Ethics ("Applicants for REALTOR® membership shall complete an orientation program on the Code of Ethics of not less than 2 hours and 30 minutes of instructional time, effective Jan. 1, 2001").

In fact, virtual orientations are not precluded by NAR policy, according to NAR's vice president of board policy and programs, Cliff Niersbach. "Whether it's acceptable locally will be at the discretion of each association."

Whether virtual orientations are right for your incoming younger membership—in whole or in part—is a question to explore today. ■



REALTOR® associations, such as Illinois, Greater Boston, and Wisconsin, have produced and posted their own online membership benefit videos that are used not only to attract members and orient new members, but also to promote membership value to existing members.

Are Your Bylaws Blocking Your Success?

Among the housekeeping Ryan Conrad, RCE, e-PRO[®], started tackling at the Lehigh Valley Association of REALTORS[®], Pa., when he took over as CEO in 2011 was a review of the bylaws.

For more than 10 years, the bylaws hadn't been fully reviewed or updated (with the exception of required NAR amendments). Many existing provisions didn't even make much sense anymore, Conrad says.

By way of example, he points to a rule in the bylaws that prohibited more than one member from the same office to serve on the board at the same time. "Although there's some merit to this provision, in practice it discouraged highly qualified members from running for the board because someone in their office was already serving," Conrad explains. Plus, considering the flood of offices consolidating in the area, it led to board members either resigning from the board because they joined the office of another board member, or passing up great business opportunities because they would have been forced to resign from the board. This issue and others were the impetus for the review that revealed even more instances of outdated and ineffective provisions, which hindered association progress.

For help auditing its bylaws, Lehigh Valley turned to Hank Lerner, director of professional practice for the Pennsylvania Association of REALTORS[®]. Lerner helped Conrad guide his association through a revision process. The bylaws now reflect the current industry and changing business practices. Here's Lerner's advice on updating your REALTOR[®] association bylaws.

1. KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

As a REALTOR[®] association, you are highly dependent on NAR rules and policies that dictate what must be included in, and excluded from, your bylaws. As a corporate entity, you are also subject to various state and federal laws regarding nonprofit (or for-profit) corporations. And in most cases, your bylaws themselves say that Robert's Rules will dictate your

operations unless you have bylaws to the contrary. Since there is likely to be a number of bylaw provisions that can't be changed, or can be changed only within certain parameters, it's good to have a copy of the current bylaws highlighting which items can't be touched.

2. FIRST, SAY IT IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Unfortunately, it's not unusual for a committee to write a sentence that sounds great, only to spend an hour arguing over what it really means. Before you start drafting clauses in bylaw-speak, talk through and write down in plain English what you're trying to accomplish. Compare your formal version to the plain-language version to see if it really does the job.

3. CONSISTENCY, CONSISTENCY, CONSISTENCY

I recently read a set of bylaws in which the section on officers required the secretary to send a written meeting notice to members 10 days before elections. But a revision to the elections section would have required that a proposed slate of officers be provided to members at least 30 days prior to the election. Both are perfectly good rules individually, but when they were read together, members could have received a slate of officers 20 days before they were actually told of the election date—and that didn't make sense. At some point before you finish your process, read the new bylaws from top to bottom to make sure there are no such inconsistencies.

Speaking of consistency, keep track of all defined terms to ensure their proper use. If you use the term "board" to refer to the "XYZ Board of REALTORS[®]" in one section, but to the "board of directors" in another, it may be difficult to tell which body is being referenced when the word is used out of those contexts.

At some point before you finish your [bylaw review] process, read the new bylaws from top to bottom to make sure there are no inconsistencies.



Your bylaws should cover your officers, board of directors, and major standing committees. But additional committees, subcommittees, task forces, etc., should be listed in a policy document so they can be more easily adjusted over time.

4. LESS CAN BE MORE

Don't try to cover every single eventuality in your bylaws. Use them to set up the major elements of your governance, but put the details in a policies and procedures document so it's easier to adjust them as circumstances change. For example, your bylaws should cover your officers, board of directors, and major standing committees. But additional committees, subcommittees, task forces, etc., should be listed in a policy document so that they can be more easily adjusted over time.



Hank Lerner

5. BYLAWS ARE OPERATIONAL, NOT INSPIRATIONAL

Some associations regularly ignore their bylaws in favor of practices that just seem to work a bit better. Don't be that association. If there's an election process that works better than the one in your bylaws, change the bylaws. If you can't get enough volunteers to fill all the spots on your board, maybe you should reduce the size of the board instead of

regularly leaving spots unfilled. At the end of the day, ignoring your own rules is a quick way to get yourself in trouble. And frankly, if members see you ignoring the bylaws on a regular basis, it can make them wonder what else you're not doing correctly.

6. USE YOUR RESOURCES

It's very easy—and sometimes preferable—to borrow language from other organizations when drafting your bylaws. Try to get copies of bylaws from several other groups, including some that aren't REALTOR® associations, so you'll have sample language to draw from. Just remember that every group has different needs, limitations, and styles, so don't just copy and paste text without editing it to fit your specific circumstances.

Don't forget that in most cases, you'll want to get your attorney involved in a bylaws review. Make sure to take advantage of other available resources, too. Local associations should check in with their state associations to see if there is legal or policy staff who can help. Since NAR staff will have to review your bylaws anyway, you may find it helpful to speak with them before your final vote to be sure there aren't any obvious problems. ■

Contact Hank Lerner, Esq., at 800-555-3390 or hlerner@parealtor.org or follow him on Twitter: @PARhank

2012 Model Bylaws for Local Member Boards

The 2012 NAR Model Bylaws are designed for boards of REALTORS® to use as a guide in adopting suitable local board bylaws. Remember, local association bylaws (and other governing documents, such as MLS Rules and Regulations) must be sent to the Member Policy Department of the national association every two years for review.

Find Your Ideal Hire



Donna Garcia is director of Human Resource Services for the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® in Chicago. She can be reached at 312-329-8311 or dgarcia@REALTORS.org.

Your association has big plans. Your new long-term strategic map details how you'll improve relevancy with business-boosting education, a social engagement strategy, streamlined internal

operations for better efficiency, and a robust online housing data system. One immediate hurdle, however, is your staff, which lacks the education programming experience, social media expertise, and tech savvy you'll need to meet your new goals.

Investing in staff training is the best option, but it's not always successful. There are times when you'll simply need to replace staff with new hires who have the unique combination of skills you require.

The ideal employee is out there

Think outside traditional association positions when you reorganize your staffing needs, whether it's to replace two or more people with one new hire or to create a new position altogether, such as social media manager. Today, associations are blurring the lines between marketing, communication, education, and even government affairs when seeking a new employee who can take on multiple responsibilities. The key to finding the ideal candidate is to detail the job requirements as much as possible.

Where to post your job

There are hundreds of places online to post your job opening. Choosing the right place makes all the difference in the quantity and quality of applications you'll receive.

If the position is specific to the REALTOR®

family or to association management, consider the following sites:

- REALTOR.org AE job board (free)
- Your state association job board
- Your LinkedIn group of industry contacts
- *NonProfit Times* (www.nonprofitjobseeker.com)
- American Society of Association Executives.
Note, if you advertise in *NonProfit Times*, your ad will automatically appear in ASAE for no additional charge.
- Idealist (www.idealists.org). You will need to verify your association's nonprofit status before the job is posted.

These niche job boards enable you to better target your audience. Some will also allow you to search their databases of applicants who have submitted a resume to be kept on file. Don't waste your time with the larger job boards, like Careerbuilder or Monster, where you may end up eliminating 75 percent of the job respondents because they don't meet your basic requirements.

Word of mouth is another alternative. Your employees, or local and state association contacts, may know someone who'd be a good fit. Spread the word among your business contacts about the kind of position you're looking to fill, and the type of person with whom you'd like to fill it. You never know—they might be able to connect you with the perfect match. ■

How do you look online to prospective employees?



While you're using social media to check out job candidates, remember, they're using it to check you out, too. Does your association have its own LinkedIn profile and Facebook page? The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® profile on

LinkedIn lists current and past employees as well as members who have LinkedIn profiles. It also details recent promotions, popular job titles, and basic company stats. Consider the value of including a bit about your company culture on your association's

Web site "about" page, or creating a "careers" page where you can post job openings, along with some of the attractive benefits you may offer—such as health insurance, 401(k), flex time, and on-the-job-training. It's important, too, to be sure that your association's social

media efforts are appealing and meaningful. Whether it's Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter, you want to be sure you're promoting your association's mission. If you were on the outside looking in at your association's information, would you want to work for you? ■



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The Future AE Leaders



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When Mark Epstein became the association executive of California's 2,250-member Tri-Counties Association of REALTORS® in 2005, he was 33 years old. Although he'd won the confidence and

support of his leadership, staff, and members through his savvy implementation of technology solutions and his thoughtful management style, he met resistance at the national level. "Unfortunately, there are still some who feel younger AEs should not have a seat at the grown-up table," Epstein laments. "We continue to deal with a few naysayers who do not recognize our value as thought leaders."

The young professionals network for association executives (AE YPN) was launched in 2008 to change this perception and create a forum through which younger AEs could feel welcome to contribute. This year Epstein—who is now the AE of the Citrus Valley Association of REALTORS®, Calif.—is the chair. "I feel the AE YPN has been successful in encouraging more AEs to participate and to change perceptions," he says. "We continue to grow both in size and knowledge by developing our network and building friendship with our peers."

Yet hurdles remain, Epstein admits. "Some think that, as younger professionals, we just want to drink and party, when, in fact, we too want to do the best at our job and make our leadership proud."

Q. What would you like seasoned AEs to better understand about the AE YPN, its objectives, and members?

The AE YPN is the future of REALTOR® associations. If our organizations are to remain relevant and essential to the business success of our members and ensure the dream of home ownership for consumers for the next 30 years, AEs at every size organization will need stronger skills. We'll need to be strong leaders with advanced tech savvy, deep political understanding, and multifaceted management skills. We will take the baton and, with the help of the AE YPN and the rest of the organization, we'll be ready.

Q. Young professionals can, on one hand, be perceived as innovative, energetic, and tech savvy. On the other, they can be viewed as inexperienced, unproven, and naive. How do you reconcile these two aspects?

Yes, younger AEs often have more native tech understanding than older AEs and we're less entrenched in the "way-things-have-always-been-done" mode of management. This is the value we can bring to any table. But we're not cocky. We know there's a lot to learn. I learn from my peers and those who have been in the business for many decades by keeping my eyes and ears open.

Q. Is the AE YPN an entry point for AEs—who otherwise would not be involved—to become engaged at the national level?

Yes, the AE YPN is a great opportunity and entry point for AEs to become involved. Five years ago when I answered an AE committee call for volunteers, I didn't know what to expect, and I was a bit scared. I felt that I had something to give and wanted to find a venue to share it in. There was no AE YPN at the time, so I had no method to network with other younger AEs across the country.

Q. One of the AE YPN's stated goals is "to help younger AEs stay connected and engaged with the association; let their voices be heard." How, specifically, are you pursuing this goal?

In an effort to stay connected this year, I started AE YPN quarterly conference calls. We all have limited time, so these calls are no more than 30 minutes. We usually have some kind of short informative update, typically focusing on new technology for associations, then the remainder of the call is something I call idea share. During this period, anyone can share ideas or best practices that have made a difference in their association.

Q. When a group of young AEs gather, what are the most common topics discussed?

AE YPN Meet Ups, held at all NAR meetings, and open to all AEs regardless of age, tend to focus on ways to do more with less. We all have less staff, and with technology we now have ways to streamline and automate processes that were once lengthy. ■

"We will take the baton and, with the help of the AE YPN and the rest of the organization, we'll be ready."

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