

REALTOR® AE

NAR.REALTOR/RAE

From Rookies to Veterans

Programs & services members need as their careers grow.

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Make staff and volunteers feel appreciated

Page 14

Great AEs lead with passion and build culture

Page 18

Boost members' business by attracting global investment

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REALTOR® AE

Summer 2017

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To join the editorial board, write an article, or contribute information, email Carolyn Schwaar, editor, REALTOR® AE magazine, cschwaar@realtors.org.

NAR.REALTOR/RAE

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Whether it's appointing volunteers to manage association programs or directing staff members to execute tasks so you can focus on a larger vision, delegating work to others is a sign of good leadership.

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From staff search to strategic planning, take advantage of expanding services for state and local associations.

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Consensus on Issues That Matter



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

About 32 years ago, I became a lobbyist and a member of the REALTOR® family at the same time. From day one, I was struck by how our members were fierce competitors in the marketplace yet worked so closely together on issues that affected the industry.

At first, the leaders I worked with were visionaries but from smaller markets. The next crop of leaders, while no less visionary, were big brokers and owners from large metropolitan markets, including my hometown of Madison, Wis. I grew up watching these brokers compete. As a young staffer, I marveled at the cooperation and compensation rules embedded in the multiple listing service that brought structure and uniformity to that marketplace. I witnessed a well-developed culture of giving to the REALTORS® Political Action Committee by politically divergent people who strived to promote and protect an industry rather than a political philosophy or party. To this day, I still admire the folks we work for, as they see with clarity the value of cooperation with one another through their association.

As association executives, we would do well to exhibit fidelity to our members' sense of community and cooperation. The challenges we face today are many, and they come from external and internal forces. External challenges include technology and data dealers altering consumer attitudes and behaviors; regulators and lawmakers advancing major tax, financial, and regulatory reforms; and changing economic realities that impact generational attitudes toward homeownership.

As we navigate these internal challenges, we should remember what our members have always demonstrated: We're stronger together. Like my early years, when I watched market competitors work together as industry partners, we, too, must overcome organizational issues, structures, personalities, procedures, and operations that protect our turf over serving our members. We must remember that wildly disparate cultures, organizations, and structures are good things that make us stronger—so

"We, as association professionals, must ensure that association objectives never obfuscate the objectives of the members we serve and share."

But perhaps more vexing are the internal challenges we face within the REALTOR® organization. Challenging relationships between some state and local associations, as well as among neighboring local associations, has created organizational stress that often puts AEs between a rock and a hard place. Board of choice, Core Standards, changing MLS operations, RPAC pressures, and a wide range of governance models are pressures often of our own making, but they have nonetheless strained organizational relationships within our REALTOR® family. To be sure, these and other changes have been adopted in pursuit of improving our organizations, but the competitive pressures they foster are real and, in some cases, acute.

long as we keep what's best for the members in our crosshairs. We, as association professionals, must ensure that association objectives never obfuscate the objectives of the members we serve and share.

I know this is easier said than done, but few things essential are simple.

This edition of the magazine focuses on how to create a better sense of community among our members and how to advance the proposition that what unites us is stronger than what divides us. As we face a difficult future and challenges from inside and outside our organizations, let's remember the lesson "they" taught us and seek to work less as competitors and more as collaborators.



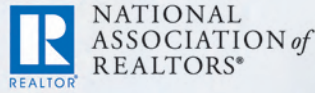
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500 New Jersey Ave., N.W.,
Washington, DC 20001-2020
800-874-6500
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Editor, REALTOR® AE magazine Carolyn Schwaar
Contributing Editors Paula Pisani, Bob Soron
Questions and comments e-mail: cschwaar@realtors.org
Advertising Sales Natalie Matter DeSoto, 800-501-9571 or
717-580-8184, natalie.desoto@theygsgroup.com

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New NAR Grants Promote Agent Safety and YPN Programs

NAR is making more money available to state and local associations to enhance programs in two important areas: member safety and engaging younger members in the association.

In June, NAR announced that state and local REALTOR® associations can apply for grants of between \$500 and \$2,500

tions are due annually in July. For more information on the NAR Safety Program Grant, contact Breanne Gingerich at bgingerich@realtors.org or 312-329-3278.

Associations looking to establish or relaunch a Young Professionals Network group can apply to NAR for funds up to \$1,000 each. The grant money is intended to provide YPNs with a means to connect with members and build involvement through education, networking, or other events. Four new network grants, at \$1,000 each, and four revitalized network grants, at \$500 each, will be available each year. The YPN Advisory Board will review applications and award grants on a quarterly basis. In addition, the Board of Directors also approved a YPN website revamp. The YPN Advisory Board is just beginning the planning the project, but the goal of the new site is to provide YPN members with content, videos, information, and resources that will help them grow and sustain their business.

For more on YPN grants and programs, contact Rob Reuter at rreuter@realtors.org.

to promote member safety. This follows a Core Standards requirement put in place a year ago that all associations must hold or promote at least one member safety activity annually. Examples of association safety programs eligible for a grant include hiring a professional speaker to present to members, creating a safety manual or marketing materials, or creating a safety webinar for members. Safety program grant applica-

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Get Ready for AE Appreciation Day!

At this year's Leadership Summit in Chicago, NAR President-Elect Elizabeth Mendenhall will promote to volunteer leaders September 28 as Dale Stinton AE Appreciation Day. Named in honor of outgoing NAR CEO Dale Stinton and planned on his 36th anniversary with NAR, the day is an opportunity for volunteer leaders to let their AEs know that they appreciate their services and the support they provide for the association.

MLS Policy Changes on Lockboxes, IDX

The NAR Board of Directors in May voted to update the NAR Lockbox Security Requirements to reflect current practices and technology including the use of temporary access codes, opening lockboxes with mobile devices, security protocols to protect against cyberattacks, and consideration of criminal history when issuing keys.

The board also approved the use of voice-activated services, such as the Amazon Echo, Google Home, and Microsoft Cortana to deliver IDX listing information. Finally, the board changed the model IDX rules to require that listing brokers be identified in all IDX displays; previously, listing broker attribution was optional.



REALTORS® Dental Insurance Plans Upgraded

NAR's group dental plans for AEs, association staff, and members now offer 100



percent coverage for preventive in-network care. REALTORS® Dental Insurance is

available through REALTORS® Insurance Marketplace, a proud partner in the REAL-

TOR Benefits® Program, with three plans (Platinum, Gold, and Value) and benefits for more than 370 procedures. SASid, Inc., the administrator of REALTORS® Dental, has licensed benefit specialists available to answer your questions. For more details, call 877-433-5845 or visit realtorsinsurancemarketplace.com/dental.

Merger Creates Third-Largest Local Association

Two Florida REALTOR® associations announced a planned merger that would form the third-largest local REALTOR® association in the nation. The REALTORS® Association of the Palm Beaches and Greater Fort Lauderdale REALTORS® will become the REALTORS® of the Palm Beaches and Greater Fort Lauderdale, serving more than 30,000 real estate professionals.

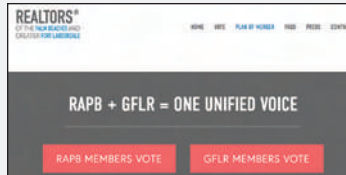
The merged association's multiple listing service, which will become one of the 10 largest MLSs in the United States, will carry more than 40,000 listings representing about \$21 billion in inventory. Members may choose between FlexMLS and Matrix for their MLS system of choice.

For brokers and agents, the merger

creates a new, much larger territory for expansion and growth without the need for joining multiple MLSs. The merged association and combined MLS expect to create economies of scale, opportunities to invest in user-friendly new technologies, and increased services to members. In addition, the merger will produce an even more powerful impact at the local, state, and national level when advocating for homeownership and private property rights.

Dionna Hall, CEO of the Palm Beaches association, will be installed as CEO of the merged association and MLS. Fort Lauderdale association CEO Rick Barkett will move forward with his plans to retire.

The merged association will maintain all six of the local service centers run by the two predecessor associations.



The associations launched a website to educate members on the benefits of the proposed merger at supportmerger.com.

RPR® Scores Exclusive New-Home Construction Data Deal

REALTORS® will soon have access to more than 100,000 new-home listings on Realtors Property Resource® through a partnership with new-construction data supplier BuildersUpdate.com.

"With new-home construction data from Builders Update, agents will have access to an important resource in today's rapidly changing market, while being protected in the sales process," says RPR® CEO Dale Ross.

According to Bill Gaul, CEO of Builders Update, new-home data availability for agents is often spotty and difficult to acquire. "We are pleased that we have worked out an agreement with RPR®, a system that is both technically advanced and highly re-



garded in the country as the 'go-to' resource for licensed agents," says Gaul. "I was immediately impressed after receiving a presentation about RPR® capabilities and functionality; however, a depth of new-home construction data was missing."

Builders typically spend a great deal of money and time trying to woo consumers directly, but in fact, according to NAR, 64 percent of new-home construction is sold with the help of a REALTOR®. RPR® expects the data integration to be available to REALTORS® later this summer.

Community Service Makes a Big Impact in Rural Washington

More than 100 members of the Thurston County REALTORS® Association, Wash., participated in their annual Community Service Day, May 18, working on projects throughout the county. Several local businesses sponsored the day of commu-

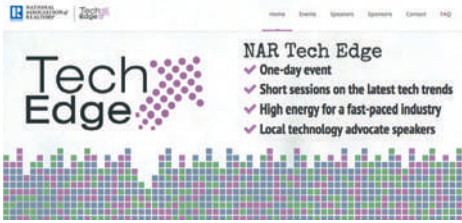


nity improvement. The event attracted positive local press, such as this report from ThurstonTalk: "The large number of REALTOR® volunteers took time away from the hot real estate market to partner with Senior Services for South Sound to help several local seniors in Olympia and Lacey clean up around their homes, doing physical projects for those who cannot. On the same day, another large group of REALTORS® made what has become an annual trek to the historic Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery to help maintain an otherwise overgrown resting place for some of the area's first pioneers."

"This is rewarding work and really feels like we make a significant difference in people's lives," says Ed Kunkel, the chair of the association committee that organized the day. "The 'before and after' at the old cemetery and in these seniors' yards was incredible and gratifying for all of us. It made me proud to be a REALTOR®."

Bring Tech Edge to Your Area

September 15 is the deadline for state and local REALTOR® associations to submit applications to host a 2018 Tech Edge in their area. NAR Tech Edge events teach REALTORS® the latest business technology skills and trends changing the real estate industry. NAR is scheduling several NAR Tech Edge events next year and is seeking partnering associations to assist in offering this full-day technology conference featuring short, energetic sessions. Participating REALTOR® associations must be able to provide an association facility or low-cost alternative with capacity for at least 130 attendees and appropriate space for sponsor tables outside the event. Associations also agree to assist with planning, marketing, sales, and other duties while NAR handles speaker and master of ceremonies contracts, agendas, registration, national marketing, and other tasks. For more information and to apply, visit the FAQ section of nartechedge.com.



Court Rejects Challenge to MLS Rules

A Kansas court found that an MLS had the discretion to reject an application from a real estate brokerage firm seeking to participate in the MLS because the broker did not meet the non-REALTOR® participant requirements. The brokerage filed an application to join the Heartland Multiple Listing Service, owned by the Kansas City Regional Association of REALTORS®, as a non-REALTOR® participant. The MLS rules allowed for nonmembers of the association to apply for MLS participation. Even though the brokerage's supervising broker had recently resigned his membership after 13 years, he was still the supervising broker of another REALTOR® association member firm, and so the brokerage was ineligible for non-REALTOR® participation. The court determined that the brokerage had failed to allege that any of its legal rights had been violated and that the association's bylaws and the MLS rules gave the association discretion in acceptance of non-REALTOR® applicants.



First-Time Home Buyer Savings Accounts

The National Association of REALTORS® supports Home Buyer Savings Accounts established at the state level and urges states to adopt such plans. NAR believes individuals or families saving for homeownership should be able to put a percentage of income or maximum amount of funds into an account that is tax free to be used within a specified amount of time for the purchase of a home. Home Buyer Savings Accounts are typically used for first time homeowners or returning home buyers.

8 in 10

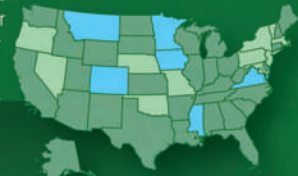
Eight in 10 non-homeowners reported that homeownership is part of their American Dream but cited the main reason why they do not currently own is that they cannot afford to buy a home.*

6

Iowa, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Virginia and Colorado have signed First Time Home Buyer Savings Accounts into law with the help of their state REALTOR® Association.

11

At least eleven states (Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Pennsylvania) have introduced new legislation on First-Time Home Buyer Savings Accounts in 2017.



Economic Benefits of First-time Home Buyer Savings Accounts

New Housing Construction

Of the thousands of potential new first-time home buyer households, many are expected to purchase newly constructed housing units. This is expected to generate more than \$61 M in construction-related economic activity in Oregon and more than \$52M in Iowa.




New Household Spending

Transitioning from renter to homeowner brings a marginal increase in consumer spending for goods and services. This is estimated to be more than \$19 million in economic activity in Mississippi.



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*According to NAR's February 2017 Aspiring Home Buyers Profile



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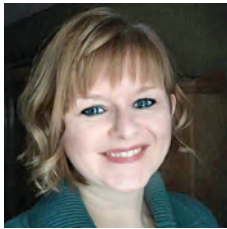
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Congratulations to New RCEs

These 11 REALTOR® AEs earned their REALTOR® association Certified Executive designation after an extensive course of study and exam. RCE is the only designation created specifically for REALTOR® association executives. It exemplifies goal-oriented AEs with drive, experience, and commitment to professional growth. Visit nar.realtor/rce.



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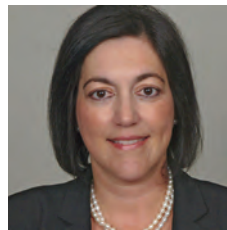
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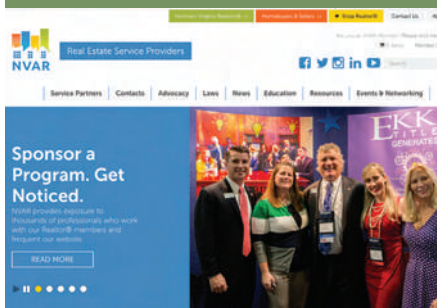
New Association Website Addresses Three Audiences

The Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS® redesigned its site, NVAR.com, to offer a three-audience experience, recognizing the distinct audiences for Northern Virginia real estate information.

“This website has been designed to provide all users with the information that is most germane to their specific real estate

interests,” says NVAR CEO Ryan Conrad. “Not only REALTORS® but real estate–related businesses and consumers also need a trustworthy source for current, accurate information about homeownership and property rights in Northern Virginia.”

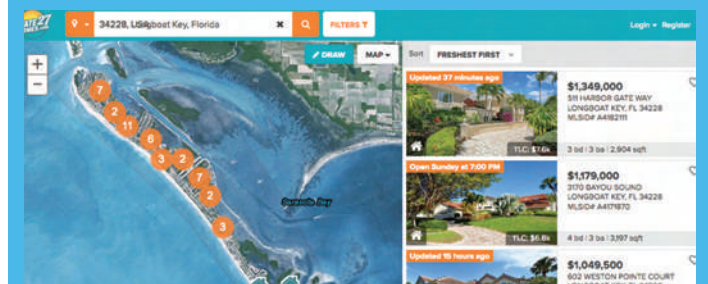
The product of more than a year’s worth of work and hundreds of hours of research, the redesign includes full mobile friendliness, improved site search, easier article sharing to social media, image-driven design, and simple navigation.



Florida MLS Launches New Consumer Website

My Florida Regional MLS, one of the five largest MLSs in the country with more than 50,000 subscribers serving the central Florida region, launched a redesigned consumer-facing website at state27homes.com. (Florida is the 27th state of the union.)

To compete with the likes of Zillow and Homes.com, the site boasts that it has “the freshest property information, because we’re the original source of the information. Our listing data is updated every five minutes, directly from My Florida Regional MLS. Even better, we are the most comprehensive source for homes for sale in Central and Southwest Florida.” To gain member loyalty, the site doesn’t accept advertising or promote some listings or agents more than others.



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Programs & Services for the Member Life Cycle

How can your association be the best source for information, education, advocacy, and development at every stage of your members' careers?

REALTOR® AE magazine surveyed members across the country in June to find out what they want from their local associations. The nearly 2,000 respondents, which we broke into five career levels, offered their wish list for association programs and services. They provided a fascinating look at how local associations can support members as their careers grow.

"If we don't know what members' needs are, then we can't know how to be relevant and helpful to them. So many associations just offer blanket messaging and courses for members. We want to really segment our membership and be their best source for information, education, advocacy, and development!"

— Maria Brogan, CEO, The Northeast Association of REALTORS®, Mass., 2017 REALTOR® AE magazine editorial board member

Rookies. Make an impact.

New members at the outset of a career (regardless of age) are generally uncertain about their competence and potential. They are dependent on others, especially their brokers and more experienced agents, for guidance, support, and feedback. Rookies are making initial choices about committing themselves to real estate as a career. They are exploring possibilities while learning about their own capabilities. Our survey findings bear this out, with the overwhelming number of rookies saying education and training is their number one need.

Your association's new member orientation may be the only time some members set foot in your office or interact with your association, aside from paying dues.

Although many won't be in the business next year, strive to make a big impact.

"At new member orientation, I learned about the association's sponsors, like banks and their programs," says one rookie with a national franchise in Memphis. "They have a lot of committees that I probably should take advantage of if there were more hours in the day. They have a women's group and a YPN. They offer scholarships. They do offer a lot."

Rookies said:

—"I am a new agent so I feel like I have just been thrown into the pool and told to learn how to swim on my own. I like the classes I have taken but they have felt intimidating to me and way too fast."

—"I feel that I will get more involved after I gain more experience as a REALTOR®."

—"This is all new to me, and I have a part-time job, but I'd love to give real estate a shot."

Although associations must pack a lot of information into each new member orientation, to a rookie, what the association offers, such as volunteer opportunities, classes, and leadership training, may sound like programs that don't have an immediate impact on today's bottom line and can be pushed off to someday in the future.

Rookies are concentrating on their own careers and learning the ropes. "When I first started in the team, I was just very focused on the team. I had my hands full. I didn't have as much time to get out," says one new member from North Carolina.

Rookies need to know: How do I get the work accomplished? Am I performing as expected? Am I developing the necessary skills to make it?

Program ideas for rookies include workshops to encourage new members to assess their goals and abilities and to formulate

career development plans. Also, periodic career counseling by more experienced agents and brokers can help new members identify life and career issues.

Rookie wish list: One question in our survey asked REALTORS® to write in ideas for business-boosting services, programs, or products they wish their local REALTOR® association offered. Most of the ideas from rookies related to “nuts and bolts” education and training on the fundamentals of making a living in real estate. Second, rookies requested leads (of course), a CRM, and free websites.

Year 1–5

Strivers. Help them grow.

REALTORS® in their first five years are budding professionals. They’re becoming more independent and many leave teams to strike out on their own. Strivers have typically learned to perform autonomously and need less guidance from brokers but want closer ties with colleagues to grow their professional network. They’re concerned with achieving and learning and are intent on making their career work.

“At this point in my career [three years] I’m looking for education and networking,

Strivers said:

—“As a newer REALTOR® I couldn’t have been as successful and knowledgeable without [my local association].”

—“Increase the local community activities that target younger REALTORS® in order to network, such as sporting or cultural events around the city.”

—“When a licensee is new, they are excited and mindful of the services offered. Being around awhile, it’s intimidating (and maybe embarrassing because I haven’t been active) to attend events.”

and the association is a valuable piece in that,” says one member. “They have different kinds of events. I go to their classes, their lunch-and-learns.”

Although rookies said they had no time for their association, strivers are eager for resources. At this stage associations can gain active participants by promoting business-boosting programs, education, and mentoring.

Strivers need to know: Am I advancing as expected? How can I advance more effectively? How do I get more exposure and visibility? How do I develop more effective peer relationships?

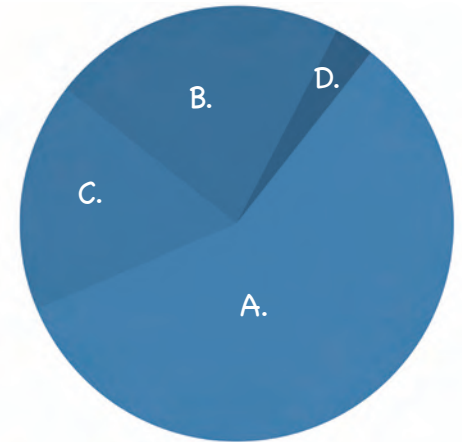
Program ideas for strivers include career assessment workshops that provide various tests of job aptitudes and abilities. Also, consider classes that explain the cost of operating a real estate business and how to set career goals.

Striver wish list: Strivers mentioned more specific business-boosting tools, likely because their experience has given them a broader perspective. Many mentioned wanting transaction tracking systems, social media listing publishing tools, and hyper-local neighborhood reports for clients. Their education and training ideas are also more specific than rookies’ and lean toward establishing their business (understanding taxes, marketing costs, and SEO), and getting better and cheaper access to data.

The strivers’ survey responses hold the first hints that they understand the association can do things for them that they are unable to do on their own or find elsewhere. Several strivers mentioned that they were concerned about finding healthcare and felt the association’s size and resources could help. A few respondents mentioned that they would like the association to become more involved in the community to better promote REALTORS®.

All 5 groups on local association services:

How much do you know about the services, programs, and products that your local REALTOR® association offers?



A. I'm somewhat aware of what it offers, 58%
 B. I'm aware of all that it offers, 22%
 C. I'm not very aware of what it offers, 17%
 D. I'm not aware of what it offers, 3%

When survey respondents’ answers were divided by experience level, the results were similar except that 30% of rookies said they were not very aware of what their local association offers, while only 8% of veterans chose this option.

Other than MLS access, what is the **biggest** benefit you receive from your local REALTOR® association today?



A. Education, 53%
 B. Market and industry information, 14%
 C. No other benefit, 12%
 D. Political and legislative advocacy, 8%
 E. Ethics, arbitration, and mediation, 5%
 F. Networking, 4%
 G. Discounts on products and services, 2.5%
 H. Consumer outreach, 2%

Years 6–10

Producers.

Give them purpose.

As members approach their 10-year mark in real estate, which often signals their acceptance as members of the professional community, they often aspire to higher compensation and professional recognition. Many work to earn their broker license or seek to move ahead by gaining expertise in another real estate specialty, such as commercial or second homes.

Producers feel confident that they have found the right career path yet still devote a tremendous amount of time and energy to building their business. This stage can be satisfying for several years, as long as growth in expertise or responsibility continues. Some people never need to move beyond this level, thriving on independent work.

Producers need to know: How can I set myself apart from others and developing a

Producers said:

–“Other than helping me get connected to my MLS, I don’t know what my local association does. If somebody said, ‘Hey, you can make an impact on your organization or your industry,’ I would do it. No one has ever approached me on a personal level.”

–“I miss when the business was more personal. We rarely connect with anyone in a transaction beyond the lender and title services. Communication is easier, but not necessarily better.”

–“We have a lot of older REALTORS® who’ve held positions [at the association] for ages and they aren’t open to new ideas. It’s really holding our board back.”

professional identity? How can I become more independent and set my own path? How can I learn to be innovative?

Program ideas for producers: This is the career stage where members may be most receptive to education and training in business specialties and earning designations. Associations can also promote volunteer positions where these members can learn a useful skill.

Producer wish list: Producers want from their local associations far less general business education than rookies or strivers want and more on specific tools to boost business, such as a CRM, innovative lead generation, and social media advertising. There’s more mention among these REALTORS® of wanting free tools, data, and services.

Many survey respondents at this stage mentioned their dissatisfaction with listing portals, saying they wanted to better “control their listings” and they wanted their MLSs to stop “giving away their listings.”

Years 11–15

Pillars.

Use their expertise.

Members at this stage of their career focus on gaining maturity. They are ready to take on responsibility, either formally or informally, for developing others in the industry. Although they may not see themselves as qualified mentors yet, they want to display their expertise.

At the same time, they must not neglect their own personal growth and development, and often seek to develop additional areas of expertise. Many may work toward solidifying their real estate expertise in one or two niche areas, such as luxury markets

Pillars said:

–“I never really hear from anyone [at my local association] in person. Communication comes from email and Facebook.”

–“Help us shut down Zillow and their other websites and services designed to ‘Walmart’ us and lessen and undermine the value of our services.”

–“[I wish my association would offer] a stricter standard to become a REALTOR®. So that it is more meaningful to the consumer.”

–“I’m looking for a way to give back to the community and meet other REALTORS® in my area. If you meet other REALTORS® you’re able to work better with them, and I think that helps the public.”

or second homes.

Pillars are ripe to chair committees or take on leadership roles in the association. Professional designations, titles, and leadership roles in the associations are coveted targets for many at this stage. Rather than being independent volunteers, they understand the need for a group approach to issues and challenges in the industry and are ready to coordinate the effort. They often rely on extensive networks both within and outside the organization.

Associations can focus on cultivating personal relationships based on recognizing these members’ individual expertise.

Pillars need to know: How do I better integrate career choices with my personal life? How do I broaden my areas of expertise? How do I deepen my networks within and outside of real estate? How can I gain fulfillment by sharing my expertise with others?

Program ideas for pillars: In our survey, this level of REALTOR® focused more on education needs than producers did, but requested more designation classes and education that covered innovative ideas

for lead generation and marketing. “Bring outside educators with fresh ideas in to our education classes,” one member suggested.

Pillar wish list: These members also requested specific tech tools such as mobile apps and video listing platforms and wanted to know how to hire a virtual assistant. Unlike the other groups, this group wanted their local REALTOR® association to help them to reach out to consumers and build the REALTOR® brand.

This group often mentioned the need to boost professionalism among agents. “The association should be a stronger advocate for competency of its members,” one member said. “There are too many REALTORS® in the market that lack the fundamental skills required to successfully complete a transaction, and it reflects poorly on the brand.”

Years 16+

Veterans. Keep them engaged.

This stage in the member’s career focuses on holding on to career successes. Although their careers may last decades more, many REALTORS® at this stage have achieved their greatest advancements and are now concerned with helping less-experienced subordinates.

At this stage, members begin thinking about leaving a legacy, imparting knowledge and experience to others.

These members have a thorough understanding of the industry and can be a catalyst for positive change, including legislatively. Veterans play a key role in shaping the future of the organization by championing promising people, programs, and ideas. They often have developed a distinct competence in several areas of expertise and have a regional or national reputation.

Veterans make ideal volunteers because they are ready to put the goals of the organization ahead of personal objectives. On the other hand, they tend to invest so heavily in the association that they are recycled through leadership positions and committees without ever leaving or acquiring the new business skills and vision to drive the association forward.

Yet associations are wise to focus on engagement and retention of these members in appropriate roles. Re-engage lapsed or silent members with a view to having them return to the fold.

“I used to be very active in my earlier years in the business,” one veteran said, “but what has caused me to back off is when I signed up at their annual conference, where they were asking for volunteers, they never bothered to contact me.”

Veterans need to know: How can I achieve the respect of others in the organization? How can I achieve a position of influence? How can I build a legacy of programs and people?

Program ideas for veterans: These members need to know that they are valued and needed at the association to serve in leadership positions and beyond. Promote

Veterans said:

—“I still enjoy courses after 45 years in business.”

—“I’m in the twilight of my career, but I’ve served in leadership locally and committees at state level. Our local board promotes interaction of members through both professional venues and social meetings. We are lucky to have our very accomplished EO.”

—“[I wish my local association would] combine with other associations so that we may use each other’s home search options.”

—“I would prefer they stop trying to be so diversified and focus on government affairs first and education second.”

programs, such as mentoring and teaching classes, that enable them to share their expertise. Ensure that you have programs for past presidents and other leaders after their terms are over because they typically have the desire to continue contributing.

Veteran wish list: Veterans were more likely than other groups in our survey to answer the question on what they want from their association.

Among the tools they want, many mentioned advertising and consumer outreach. Several mentioned that their association could do more in direct public relations to “tell our story of why we are relevant (education, experience, dedication, loyalty, complicated process, etc.) and the contributions in time and money for our community.”

Common themes mentioned across career levels:

- A need for affordable healthcare.
- An appreciation of all that their association offers.
- A need for evening and weekend education at a convenient location.
- A fix to the “Zillow problem,” referring to “buying back leads” and the company’s general use of listing data to generate revenue.

Veterans requested more resources for commercial practitioners and appraisers. They also stressed the need for better training for new agents, and many said leadership at their association was only open to a select few, either large brokers or franchise brokers.

Veterans were the only group to mention (both positively and negatively) RPAC or advocacy as a function of the association. Several mentioned that they wished their association would “get out of the business of endorsing political candidates or parties.”

By Carolyn Schwaar

A Little Appreciation Goes a Long Way

Low-cost, effective ways to make staff and volunteers feel connected and valued.

I'm not typically one to browse the self-help section at the bookstore, but about 20 years ago I came across a book that changed my personal life, and I set out to apply it to my REALTOR® association.



Guyla Greenly is the former CEO of the Wyoming Association of REALTORS®, with 11 years' experience in association management. She is currently a writer, speaker, consultant, and certified facilitator of the Appreciation at Work programs, which she has applied to leadership training at REALTOR® associations.

It wasn't easy. In fact, it was awkward. How do you talk about love at the office?

It was Dr. Gary Chapman's book *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts* that made me a true believer in the importance of showing people love in the way they best relate to it and receive it. But I didn't necessarily love my board of directors.

So as an experiment, I put my association staff through the love languages assessment at a retreat, and they humored me. But as we actually implemented the practice of showing love (appreciation) to each other in the office, a transformation happened. We created a more positive work environment. Over time we had very low staff turnover, and those who did move on did so for personal reasons but said that they loved working at the Wyoming Association of REALTORS®. One employee told me she had never worked anywhere that cared enough about her and the harmony of the office to go through assessments and trainings such as this.

Although it worked well for my staff, I was apprehensive about putting my board through the same training. Then, after a bit of research, I found the solution: Chapman had coauthored a book with Dr. Paul White to apply the same general principles to a professional environment: *The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace: Empowering Organizations by Encouraging People*. Rather than implementing a formal program, I tried to practice these principles as part of my overall leadership style. I showed authentic appreciation to people who were at times cranky, complaining, and argumentative, and it worked. It resulted in improved relationships.

When I would listen patiently to their concerns, I heard what was really upsetting them (they didn't feel appreciated in whatever area they were complaining about), and then I would show them the appreciation they needed. I made friends with people whom others, including my predecessors, had considered enemies.

One time, a past president known for his abrasive manner emailed me with a complaint. Instead of responding defensively, I acknowledged his many years of service and his ongoing RPAC support and respectfully addressed his concerns. A few days later, I received a call



from his wife, also a past president. She thanked me for being truly appreciative of his contributions and shared that he had felt pushed aside, no longer relevant or respected, and angry that no one had previously addressed his issue. My response left him feeling valued. It took a few minutes to research and respond, but the result of showing him appreciation was a future of harmonious interactions with him and his wife.

So, how can you try this approach at your REALTOR® association?

A harmonious association culture begins with the staff and leadership and permeates all aspects of the association. Everyone wants to feel valued and that their efforts matter. When people don't feel appreciated, there is not only a higher turnover rate among staff and fewer volunteers but conflict goes up; trust, productivity, quality of work, and member service ratings go down.

An appreciation program isn't a magic potion and isn't guaranteed to transform your culture, but it's a great place to start if you want to enjoy your work, help your staff become more contented, guide your leaders to a more gratifying service, and keep your volunteer ranks full.

How to get started with appreciation

For individuals to truly feel valued, appreciation has to be:

- 1. Communicated regularly.** Once or twice a year at a member appreciation picnic or awards banquet isn't effective. People need frequent feedback that they are valued (the frequency will differ according to the individual and the setting).
- 2. Individualized and personal.** A blast email to the board saying, "Good job, team. Way to get the project done," is not as effective as you may think. Focusing on individuals and their specific contribution is far more meaningful.
- 3. Perceived as authentic.** The biggest complaint about recognition programs is that they feel contrived and procedural instead of sincere. If the message of appreciation isn't believed to be genuine, you're wasting your time.
- 4. Given in the way that's meaningful to the recipient.** If you try to show appreciation in the way you perceive it, but it isn't in a way that's important to the other person, you waste time and energy.

This last point is key and needs a bit more explanation. How can you know how someone else wants to be appreciated? Some volunteers appreciate tangible gifts (a coupon for a cup of coffee or a plaque) and some do not. Some crave public recognition, but others don't want to go up front to receive a reward. Some volunteers want to celebrate their accomplishments as a group in a social setting, while others do not. According to *The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace*, appreciation is shown by giving affirmation, quality time, acts of service, tangible gifts, and appropriate physical touch.

After a while, you may become very good at reading what type of appreciation the people you work with need, but to start out, ask.

For example, I always set aside time at NAR's Leadership Summit to get to know my president-elect and talk about goals and roles in the upcoming year. Of course, we go through the President/Chief Staff Executive Checklist but I also learn personal things that give me clues as to how I can show appreciation effectively throughout their term. I express how important it is for the president to also practice appreciation and get to know the other leaders and volunteers.

For a group, I would take my board of directors through a personality assessment exercise at our leadership orientation designed to help them identify their own leadership, learning, communication, and appreciation styles and those of their colleagues. This not only helped them work effectively together but also helped my president and me learn how to better communicate appreciation.

One of my past presidents is a strong example of this concept: Instead of purchasing the same thank-you gift for all members of the executive committee, she visited with each member and learned their passions and listened to their concerns. She then wrote personalized thank-you notes expressing what she had appreciated about each individual throughout her term (words of affirmation). Lastly, she made contributions in their names to their preferred charities (not her preferred charity).

When we take time to invest in others, we raise them, and ourselves, up to a stronger level of performance. A leader who feels authentically appreciated will be more inspired to show up to the board meeting prepared and on time, interact positively with membership and other members of the board, and continue serving the organization.

Additional contributions to this article by Dr. Paul White, a psychologist, author, speaker, and consultant. He is coauthor of *The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace* and *Rising Above a Toxic Workplace: Taking Care of Yourself in an Unhealthy Environment* and author of *The Vibrant Workplace: Overcoming the Obstacles to Building a Culture of Appreciation*.

What's on Your Plate?



*Plate does not represent an exhaustive list of AE duties.



Doing More by Delegating

Whether it's appointing volunteers to manage association programs or directing staff members to execute tasks so you can focus on a larger vision, delegating work to others is a sign of good leadership.

Delegating not only relieves your sense of pressure and work overload—it extends the boundaries of what you and your association can achieve.

But learning to delegate means overcoming three obstacles: pride, mistrust, and disorganization.

We feel pride when we're high-achieving, and we want to be seen as self-sufficient. This is partly why many people find it difficult to ask others for help. But instead, think of delegating as an expression of confidence in others' ability to do the job. Delegating is about giving members or staffers an opportunity, not a sign of your insufficiency. After all, membership organizations only function when members participate.

Trusting a volunteer or staff member with an important task can be a big leap of faith. If the very thought of delegating makes you uneasy, start with a single low-priority task. As you see the job can be completed successfully without you, you'll gain confidence in the process and can move on to delegating another task, and another.

Often people don't delegate because it takes a lot of effort to organize how members or staffers should help, and then more time to train and support them along the way. How many times have you said to yourself, "It's easier and quicker if I just do it myself." But this may not be the best use of your time. Although it's counter-intuitive to invest time coaching someone to perform a task you

didn't have time for in the first place, the investment pays off in the long run with more capable employees and volunteers. The next time a similar project comes along, you can delegate the task with a higher degree of confidence that it will be done well.

How to Delegate to Staff

If you have staff and are delegating a new responsibility, make sure they are comfortable with the new role. Position the task as a sign of your confidence in their skills. Give them ownership of the project, ensuring they have the appropriate training to be successful. And don't forget to update their job descriptions.

How to Delegate to Members

The REALTOR® volunteers at the National Association of REALTORS® are evidence that members are not only willing but exceptionally capable of taking on a wide range

of association duties. From speaking to the press and legislators to planning and hosting events and developing new programs and initiatives, your members are up to the task.

Start by selecting key members who have the skills, time, and personality to accomplish the assignment you have for them. Clearly outline the desired outcome and give them the tools and resources they'll need. Empower them to make decisions yet be available to guide them and answer questions. Be patient but establish a schedule for checking in with progress updates. Focus on what needs to be accomplished, rather than detailing how the work should be done. This builds trust. Finally, when the work is completed, give recognition where it's deserved.

Since volunteers aren't paid, find a reward that will motivate them to take on new responsibilities. Some volunteers perform well in tasks that include social and networking opportunities, while others want a task that will make a difference in the association or the community. All members want recognition and appreciation for their efforts.

What happens when the tasks you delegate fail? Remember, delegation is a shared task between you and your member. Did the volunteer have enough support, time, or feedback? If so, don't be afraid of failure. For volunteers to truly own their tasks, they need to know failure is a possibility.

Delegation is a win-win when done appropriately. Members and staff have the opportunity to develop their skills and cultivate a sense of inclusion in the success of the organization. Meanwhile, you can focus your own efforts on the highest-priority tasks—all while expanding the amount and quality of services your association can deliver.

By Carolyn Schwaar

Best association tasks to delegate

- Tasks that recur, in a similar fashion, such as annual events and regular meetings, because there's already an established framework or process.
- Tasks that enable members to develop skills that will help them in their real estate career, such as public speaking, negotiations, and event planning. Have a member who holds outstanding open house events? Ask him or her to work on your next event.
- Tasks where a failure wouldn't impact other programs or products.
- Tasks where members can work in teams, reducing the impact if one team member fails to perform.
- Tasks where members are responsible for one part of a program managed by staff or the AE, such as securing an event location or finding speakers.

Build Culture, Lead With Passion

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

In a previous column and at my presentation at the March AE Institute in Denver, I revealed the results of my study that showed that highly successful REALTOR® CEOs possess at least one of 10 intangible skills. Some skills are “mirror images” of one another—that is, the same core skill can be exhibited differently by two CEOs, depending on their personality or style. So the 10 intangible skills are actually five pairs. In this issue, and in future columns, I will cover the skills. The first pair is passion and culture. We’ll explore what they are, why they are valuable skills, and how you can cultivate them.

What is passion?

Passion, for the purposes of this article, is defined as the ability to display intense positive enthusiasm. It is often accompanied by high energy and strong beliefs. Passion is made up of individual beliefs.

Highly successful CEOs with passion visibly display intense emotion but are not overcome by it. They have a compelling enthusiasm focused on the philosophy or direction of the association. They are not interested in fads or frivolous activities. Passionate CEOs are in harmony with the key values of the association, such as enabling members to succeed in business and protecting and promoting homeownership, and this generates their enthusiasm.

Passion is infectious. It raises the energy level of everyone in the organization.

Many highly successful CEOs say that finding something meaningful within the context of the career responsibilities and pursuing it regardless of the setbacks and accomplishments is empowering. This sense



of purpose creates joy and enhances the perception of passion.

In passionate CEOs there is a higher degree of focus on the goal. As with other highly successful CEOs, passionate ones are focused, organized, and driven to succeed. Of course, they have daily business goals, weekly goals, and long-term strategic tactics. But they also have personal life goals and accomplishments desired outside the scope of being a CEO. Bucket lists are common among passionate CEOs.

Having a series of life goals clearly listed keeps passionate CEOs focused on future possibilities. They always have something they look forward to and are excited about. Many of them visit their goals every day, even first thing in the morning and last thing at night, as a routine.

Passionate CEOs are not constrained by time or schedule. They work tirelessly to accomplish their goals because, after all,

achieving them is a personal mission. They tend to be workaholics and available most anytime if it is within the scope of their passion. They have unbounded energy for the subjects that they appreciate.

Tessa Hultz, CEO of the Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS® in North Carolina, is a passionate CEO. I facilitated the executive search for that association, which resulted in her hiring. After Tessa’s first interview, one member said, “I am exhausted just talking to her. But I like it!”

Not everyone is cut out to work for a passionate CEO because they engage their staff in the same mission and energy. To do this they create an atmosphere of trust and camaraderie and a common desire to excel. The result is a staff team that works together to accomplish the objectives with a high degree of enthusiasm.

Of the intangible skills, passion is the one that fades with the departure of the CEO.

What is culture?

Culture in an organizational setting refers to the ability to establish a set of values and beliefs for a group. It defines parameters and expected behaviors and becomes a common ground for decisions and actions. Culture is group beliefs, making it a companion of passion, which is individual beliefs.

Culture is a transformative environment. An association that establishes a clearly understood culture based upon values and beliefs has set forth an expectation for everyone in the group including staff, leadership, volunteers, and members. In such an atmosphere, everyone tends to rise to meet the expectations of the group.

Highly successful CEOs create, influence, and advance the culture. It is an extension of the CEO's organizational philosophy.

Culture is structured passion. I have worked with hundreds of associations as a consultant. Within minutes of walking into an association meeting or facility, I know whether it is a successful group or a failing one because there is a "spirit" of the organization that can be felt. It is evident in the small things—the nuances—how the volunteer members treat one another, their attitude and personal bearing, and the tenor of the conversation. That "spirit" is an underlying perception that permeates associations. When clearly articulated, it is the culture of the organization.

Tricia Thomas, CEO of the Bay East Association of REALTORS® in Pleasanton, Calif., says this about the culture of her association: "We love to delight our members. At every event we ask how we can delight our members and make them feel special. We want each member to feel they are the most important person in the room."

Most successful CEOs incorporate shared values in virtually everything the association does. Their mission statement,

vision, and value proposition all set a high standard for leadership, professionalism, and service.

There is an action component to being a culture-driven CEO. These CEOs listen to the members and take specific action based upon their members' perceptions. They are transparent and place high value on results. And they critically analyze every program, product, and service to see if it is delivering the desired results among the membership and, if not, they dispassionately abandon it.

Culture demands constant maintenance. Since culture is inclusive, everyone owns its successful implementation—especially the staff.

Steve Francks, CEO of the Washington REALTORS® Association, details this in a staff culture statement that was developed by the staff, not the CEO: "Our staff supports the following values:

- To contribute to a positive workplace
- To work in a collaborative environment
- Freedom to innovate, create, and develop new ideas
- To give and receive constructive criticism
- A mutual commitment to success
- To celebrate our uniqueness
- To give and receive recognition of achievement
- To give and receive encouragement
- Trust in each other's competencies."

Of the intangible skills, culture is the one that endures beyond the tenure of the CEO.

Developing these intangible skills

Although many of the intangible skills are difficult to develop, passion and culture are two that can be learned.

Take passion, for example. If you consider yourself to be passionate about your job and your organization, perhaps you've been hesitant to express it. Experiment with showing your personal enthusiasm more often. If you're unsure whether you are a passionate

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 to 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, not just course content.
- Join or create peer networks of like-minded executives.

CEO, think about what you are passionate about (service, achievements, organization) and see how those can manifest themselves in your work.

Developing an organizational culture is an old concept that is getting more attention these days. Countless consulting companies and websites can guide your organization to find and codify its core beliefs and give you the tools to establish and maintain a culture.

In our next column we will explore the skills of relationships and connections.



Jerry Matthews' executive career spans more than 20 years as a REALTOR® state association CEO and more than 12 years as an industry consultant. His consulting practice focuses on facilitating change for executives and organizations. JerryMatthews.com.

The Latest on 'Coming Soon' Listings

States issue new guidance on what makes these listings legal or not.

Coming Soon listings are on the rise as housing inventory tightens in many areas, causing concern among real estate professionals and prompting real estate commissions to issue guidance on the topic. Here's what you need to know to keep your members informed and out of legal or ethical dilemmas.

What's a Coming Soon listing?

A Coming Soon listing refers to a property that is not available for showing or sale until a later date. "Coming soon" can be a legitimate advertising technique, allowing the owners more time to complete repairs, pack, or otherwise prepare the property for showing or sale. A legitimate Coming Soon listing should truly be unavailable for purchase or showing.

Sometimes, however, "coming soon" advertising is used to circumvent the MLS, market the property to a select group of people, or pressure a buyer to use the listing broker for the transaction, which not only breaches real estate professionals' ethical duties to clients but may violate real estate license and consumer protection laws.

How to tell a legitimate Coming Soon listing from a nefarious one

Advertising a property before it's ready for showing may not be a new practice. But what's on the rise may be the nefarious intent behind the tactic.

In response to a flood of Coming Soon listings, some real estate commissions have stepped in to issue official commentary on what makes this advertising legal or not.

Most recently, the Idaho Real Estate Commission issued Guideline No. 8, "Coming Soon Listings." The guidance warns that



A legitimate Coming Soon listing should truly be unavailable for purchase or showing.

Failing to act in the client's best interest and failing to disclose the pros and cons of a limited marketing plan, such as "coming soon" advertising, can violate state real estate license laws and regulations, MLS policies, and the REALTOR® Code of Ethics.

"coming soon" advertising that is used to market a property to a select group, such as investors or buyers represented by the seller's agent, constitutes a misleading advertisement, which violates numerous Idaho state laws. "Too many times, ... the property is advertised as 'Coming Soon' for the purpose of excluding the open market from selling the property. The listing agent, or agency, believes they can produce a buyer without any additional assistance from competing licensees," the guidance states.

The Idaho commission also highlights that misrepresenting a property as "coming soon" may violate Idaho's Consumer Protection Act. Furthermore, "claiming that a seller accepted an offer and, therefore, they must be content with their transaction, is not a safe haven."

The Nebraska Real Estate Commission identifies in its guidance document No. 40, "Coming Soon Listings," four criteria for permissible "coming soon" advertising, specifically: (1) the advertising broker must have an active listing agreement in place; (2) the advertising must be done in the name in which broker does business and under the broker's supervision; (3) the advertising must be done with the property owner's, or his or her authorized agent's, knowledge and written consent; and (4) the listing must in fact be "coming soon" and not currently being shown or marketed to a limited group. The state commission document also cautions real estate practitioners: "While permissible, the use of 'coming soon' advertising has potential to give rise to violations of the license act."

Although new rules at many MLSs enable agents to enter "coming soon" properties

under a special status, improper "coming soon" properties negatively affect the MLS and may violate its rules. MLSs facilitate transactions by creating a consolidated source of accurate property information and function at their best when information is complete. Improper Coming Soon listings compromise that accuracy. They also undermine cooperation among real estate professionals through the MLS by requiring potential buyers to use the listing broker for showings and offers to purchase.

Finally, improper "coming soon" advertising may also violate state laws and regulations. Real estate professionals owe certain fiduciary or statutory duties to clients under state licensing laws and regulations, and that duty is violated when the professional does not act solely in the client's best interest. State laws also typically require truth in advertising, and improper Coming Soon listings are misleading and inaccurate.

Why Coming Soon listings are an association issue

It's important to educate members on their ethical and legal duties under NAR's Code of Ethics, their MLS's rules and policy, and their state's laws and regulations. Members who misuse "coming soon" advertising risk disciplinary action by their local association and real estate commission and lawsuits brought by dissatisfied clients.

Associations are welcome to reprint or link to this article or "*Coming Soon – Is it in the Seller's Best Interest?*," by NAR General Counsel Katherine Johnson, available at nar.realtor.

6 best practices for legitimate Coming Soon listings ...

- _ Are only for properties under a signed listing agreement.
- _ Comply with all state licensing laws and regulations.
- _ Have a compelling reason that this tactic is in the best interest of the client.
- _ Have the client's informed consent in a thoroughly documented written agreement.
- _ Restrict showings and bids equally to all potential buyers.
- _ Comply with MLS rules.

7 signs indicating nefarious Coming Soon listings ...

- _ Are not in the seller's best interest.
- _ Are made without the seller's permission or consent.
- _ Have no logical or reasonable reason to be marketed in this way.
- _ Have no signed listing contract.
- _ Are actively shown only to select groups of buyers.
- _ Accept offers.
- _ Compel sellers to accept offers from a buyer who is represented by the seller's own agent.



Chloe Hecht is an associate counsel at the National Association of REALTORS®. Contact her at 312-329-8248 or checht@realtors.org.

Setbacks, Lessons, and Marching Onward

We have all been there: That moment when you know your life will never be the same. Some of us experience this when we meet our soul mate, when our first child is born, when we lose someone we love, or when we experience deep trauma. My life-changing experience falls in the trauma category.

My appendix burst in early 2016. It had been ruptured for three days before doctors were able to pull it out, and I had complications afterward from almost going into septic shock. People often question why I didn't listen to my body, but the truth is that I didn't exhibit any typical symptoms. To shorthand this story, here is my ordeal by the numbers: 16 days in the hospital over two separate

to realize this ... and we must learn that the setbacks and grieves which we endure help us in our marching onward."

A new reality had formed for me. I started talking with my family and friends and on Facebook about these "life experiences" I was having. I came to realizations about my life and how I wanted to live it. I wanted to take care of myself and my family first and my job second. I learned that it's okay to stand up for myself and my own needs and be my own best advocate.

I discovered in the aftermath of my experience that my association's needs and I no longer fit and that it was time for a change. So, when an opportunity arose that was a better fit, I embraced it and went full steam ahead. Change—something that previously scared me—seemed not only possible all of a sudden, but positive.

Although I helped build my previous association from the merger of three in 2014 and enjoyed countless rewarding experiences there, I knew they would want the AE that I was, not the new person I had become. So with a new life start came a start at a new association. Now, I try to imbue everything I do at my association with a sense of optimism, joy, and gratitude, and I see this reciprocated by my staff and leaders.

My own experience has made me a more compassionate AE. We can't see the periphery of our members' lives. We don't

see divorce, sick children, the elderly parents they care for, financial difficulties, or a client that just gave them an earful. They know they can call us during certain hours and we will answer. You may feel like a target at times, but let it go. Don't wear that person's negativity, because there is likely something much bigger happening in their life than late fees, lost paperwork, or issues with their lockbox key.

"I discovered in the aftermath of my experience that my association's needs and I no longer fit."

I know how hard our jobs can be. We work tirelessly for our boards and members, and it isn't always acknowledged. That's okay, too. Be grateful for those members who do build you up and let them know how much you appreciate them. Tell that staff member who is the jelly to your peanut butter how much you love having them around. Hug people. Do what makes you happy and don't ever apologize for it. Dance. Sing. Tell jokes. Hula-hoop. Eat BBQ. Knit. Pray. Be you.



Amy DuBose (right) and staff at the Bryan-College Station Regional Association of REALTORS®, Texas.

stays, three surgeries, two IV lines, 64 bags of fluid and antibiotics, 16 pounds lost, five weeks out of work, and eight inches of intestines and one appendix removed.

Henry Ford once said, "Life is a series of experiences, each one of which makes us bigger, even though sometimes it is hard



Amy DuBose, RCE, is the association executive at the Bryan-College Station Regional Association of REALTORS® and MLS, Texas. Reach her at ae@bcsrealtor.com or 979-846-3751.

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need to know: commercial members

Boost Members' Business by Attracting Global Investment

11 REALTOR® associations partner with NAR at MIPIM's USA Pavilion.

As part of an initiative to raise the profile of the U.S. as a real estate investment opportunity and to promote the expertise of REALTORS®, NAR partnered with 11 local and state REALTOR® associations this past spring in the NAR-USA Pavilion at MIPIM in Cannes, France. The world's largest international commercial property event, the convention draws more than 24,000 attendees from 90 countries, including 5,000 investors.

The NAR-USA Pavilion features market-centric kiosks for associations to showcase their area and local development projects. For returning partner Missouri REALTORS®, CEO John Sebree, RCE, sees a solid strategic reason to be at MIPIM: "We are within 600 miles of 52 percent of all U.S. manufacturing plants. We capitalized on this in meetings with international investors. We made a conscious decision to promote our state for economic development knowing that the international buyers will follow. We had a very positive experience at MIPIM—it is a great investment."



In the past three years, the number of NAR partners at MIPIM has grown from three to 13, with that number expected to increase. NAR's exhibiting REALTOR® association partners in 2017 included Miami, Illinois, Missouri, Nevada with the Las Vegas and Reno local associations, Arizona with the local Scottsdale association, and the Beverly Hills/Greater Los Angeles Association of REALTORS®. NAR's official pavilion sponsors were Florida REALTORS®, the Institute of Real Estate Management, the Washington State Association of REALTORS®, and the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®.

First-time exhibiting partner Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® had a tremendous experience, says CEO Phil Tedesco, RCE, CAE. "As a first-time attendee, I was blown away by the scope and the depth of this conference. Our presence at MIPIM has already presented additional opportunities to promote the state of Rhode Island. The opportunity is not about the association, but about the association's role as an economic driver and leader within the state. Our leadership has made the connection and clearly sees the value."

The Miami Association of REALTORS® has long seen the value in international events. CEO Teresa King Kinney, RCE, CAE, says MIPIM helps her association build momentum and achieve unparalleled global presence and visibility. "As the top market for international buyers and investors in the U.S., Miami benefits from our participation at MIPIM and other international exhibitions and events by establishing new relationships, connecting with new partner organizations, and promoting the U.S. and Miami to new worldwide audiences."

In addition to representing investment opportunities in their areas, local associations bring along members eager to make international connections. Chip Ahlswede, RCE, CEO of the Beverly Hills/Greater Los Angeles Area Association of REALTORS®, says, "MIPIM provides opportunities for REALTORS® to interact with international investors, clients, and professionals in order to create the global connections and awareness necessary to compete in their local real estate marketplace." As an additional benefit to members, NAR negotiates a substantial discount on the event registration fee, saving members hundreds of dollars.



“Our presence at MIPIM has already presented additional opportunities to promote the state of Rhode Island. The opportunity is not about the association, but about the association’s role as an economic driver and leader within the state.”

— Phil Tedesco, RCE, CAE, CEO, Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®

Illinois REALTORS® 2017 President Doug Carpenter believes MIPIM not only builds business for REALTORS® but also educates the international community on what a REALTOR® stands for. “The event allows us to make sure foreign real estate investors understand the value of doing business with a REALTOR®. The show has traditionally been geared toward European investors, and many of them may not be familiar with the REALTOR® brand and the expertise and professionalism that come with it.”

Foreign investors flowed nearly \$200 billion into U.S. commercial and residential real estate last year, according to research from both NAR and Real Capital Analytics, because the U.S. is known for market stability and long-term financial growth. Grab your share of international investment by attending MIPIM 2018.

—By Jean Maday

To learn more about NAR’s MIPIM initiative, visit nar.realtor/MIPIM. To learn about the benefits of being a partner in the NAR-USA Pavilion, contact Jan Hope, VP of commercial and global services, at jhope@realtors.org or Jean Maday, director of commercial development and services, at jmaday@realtors.org.



Foreign investors now target smaller markets

One-fifth of surveyed REALTORS® practicing in commercial real estate closed a sale with an international client in 2016, and as foreign investors flock to smaller-sized commercial properties in secondary and tertiary markets, many REALTORS® are confident that increased sales and leasing activity will occur in 2017.

This is according to the new 2017 Commercial Real Estate International Business Trends survey NAR released in June, which analyzed cross-border commercial real estate transactions made by REALTORS® in 2016. Most REALTORS® who specialize in commercial real estate reside in smaller commercial markets where the typical deal is less than \$2.5 million.

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, says the appetite for U.S. commercial real estate property was strong from foreigners last year and shows little signs of slowing in 2017.

“Multiple years of steady job growth and the strengthening U.S. economy—albeit at a modest pace—makes commercial property a safe bet for global investors looking to diversify their portfolios and generate returns outside their country of origin,” he said. “While Class A asset prices in many large markets have surpassed precrisis levels, REALTORS® in many middle-tier and smaller markets stand to benefit from the increased interest from foreign and domestic commercial property investors.”

Added Yun, “Forty percent of REALTORS® expect an increase in foreign buying clients this year. The healthy labor markets and lower property prices in smaller markets are poised to make up a larger share of activity.”

Of the 69 percent of REALTORS® who indicated they completed a commercial real estate transaction last year, 20 percent reported closing a deal for an international client. Additionally, 22 percent of REALTORS® said they completed a lease agreement on behalf of a foreign client.

The top countries of origin for buyers were China (17 percent), Mexico (14 percent) and the United Kingdom and Venezuela (both at 7 percent), while sellers were typically from China (17 percent) or Brazil, Canada, France, and Mexico (all at 10 percent).

The survey also found that foreign buyers of commercial property typically bring more cash to the table than those purchasing residential real estate. Sixty percent of international transactions were closed with cash, while NAR’s 2016 residential survey found that exactly half of buyers paid in cash.

NAR’s 2017 Profile of International Activity in U.S. Residential Real Estate is scheduled for release this summer.

Meet NAR's Newest AE Resource

From staff search to strategic planning, take advantage of expanding services for state and local associations.

If you didn't have a chance to meet Kevin Watkins, the National Association of REALTORS®' new director of strategic

association management, at AEI or the Midyear Legislative meetings, schedule a 30-minute one-on-one consultation session at this year's REALTORS® Conference and Expo in Chicago. Watkins has a wealth of human resources and association management experience and expertise to share, and he's also developing new programs.



NAR's new Director of Strategic Association Management Kevin Watkins joined the organization in December. Contact Kevin at 312-329-8311 or kwatkins@realtors.org.

REALTOR® AE sat down with NAR's newest addition to the association services staff to talk about what he and his department can offer you in 2017.

What new or enhanced programs for associations should AE take advantage of this year?

We're focusing on three major initiatives this year for associations: our workforce planning program, our staff recruitment services, and our strategic planning consulting.

Workforce planning helps associations take a critical look at whether or not it's time to change their staff structure. Many associations have had the same staff structure for years, even though it no longer aligns with their business or strategic plan.

We go in to associations and audit the current staff environment and offer suggestions on restructuring and new job descriptions. The goal is to make sure that they're

positioned to grow with the right number of staff and people in the right roles. We also look at how associations can develop competitive compensation and benefit plans to attract and keep the best employees. We work not only with the association executive but also with the executive committee to ensure that their vision of the association can be appropriately staffed.

The second big program we'd like associations to take advantage of is staff recruitment. The labor market now in the U.S. is tight, and with unemployment being so low there are not a lot of candidates out there that are actively seeking employment, so hiring is becoming more difficult and time-consuming for associations. We can help lead staff recruitment efforts with a process that covers the full cycle from writing position specifications to job marketing through to screening, interview coordination, and the negotiation process itself.

Later this year, we'll be doing surveys to find out the types of HR and association management **training opportunities** AEs would like.

The third major service for associations is, of course, our strategic planning. We've helped dozens of associations of all sizes not only develop a strategic plan but build a process for ensuring that their plan is implemented and maintained over time.

What's on the horizon for new association services?

We're rolling out a revised compensation and analysis review program for AEs and staff. We recommend that associations review their compensation structure every other year to make sure they're competitive and that their federal Fair Labor Standards Act classifications are current and in compliance with federal law. We've revised and enhanced this entire process.

Next on our list is developing a confidential talent pool for REALTOR® association positions nationwide. As we do more CEO and staff searches for associations, we want to have a pool of talented people to consider. We encourage AEs and association staff who are ready for the next step in their careers to engage with us so that when we get new searches, we can engage with them.

Later this year, we'll be doing surveys to find out the types of HR and association management training opportunities AEs would like. We're envisioning an on-demand training library online.

What services do you offer for single-staff associations?

I've been very involved with single-staff associations when it comes to training their board of directors, especially training on how the board and leadership and AE should work together, including roles and procedures. We can help one-staff-person associations explore revenue opportunities so that they can expand their staffing in the future if that's applicable. We can also help with strategic planning and working to make sure the plan is realistic and doable with the resources available.

My local REALTOR® association?
I have no idea what they do for me.



The National Association of REALTORS®' completely revised **Value Proposition Toolkit** will help you convey the benefits of membership and the relevancy of your local association.

This value proposition resource (updated with the Core Standards in mind) provides you with messaging options and inspiration – themes and graphics – to communicate how your association positively impacts members'

real estate businesses. Learn how to highlight the relevant programs and services members can't get anywhere else and communicate the importance of REALTORS® in the political process and in your community.

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Leaving a Legacy of Leadership

Departing wisdom from a veteran AE on community and commitment.



Ginger Downs

The William R. Magel Award of Excellence, which Ginger Downs, RCE, CAE, will receive at the REALTORS® Conference & Expo in Chicago in November, is the cherry on the top of a long and distinguished career in REALTOR® association management. Downs has been recognized numerous times for her work and commitment in the real estate industry, and, although she plans to retire early next year, her legacy in leadership will remain.

Downs started her real estate career more than 30 years ago at the Spokane Association of REALTORS®, moved to lead the Seattle King County REALTORS®, and has been CEO of the Chicago Association of REALTORS® since 2005.

“Life as a REALTOR® AE is never boring,” she says. “In order to be successful in the long term, remain flexible and adaptable, bring your A game to the show, work hard, never stop learning, keep the members front and center, and surround yourself with people smarter than yourself.”

Under Downs’ leadership the Chicago association has enjoyed volunteer involvement from a wide range of top industry professionals in the city, along with a dedicated and enthusiastic Young Professionals Network of

next-generation REALTORS®.

“CAR’s success at engagement has been due in large part to the passion and commitment of its volunteer leadership,” says Downs. “Diversity is the fabric of life in Chicago, and it is a strategic decision by our leadership and staff to actively seek out local industry leaders of diverse age ranges, firm representation, ethnicity, cultural background, and business specialties.”

The Chicago association has used this intentional engagement strategy with its younger members to build one of the largest and most active YPNs in the country.

“Our YPN community is our future industry and association leadership,” says Downs. “They are our social media champions and they promote on our behalf.”

Downs’ faith in her YPN advisory board is so strong that she invited them to develop the association’s last strategic plan. “It was tweaked slightly by our board of directors, but overall their vision has guided us for the past three years.”

With the goal of building a strong member community, CAR has actively partnered with local chapters of real estate specialty associations and created a formal advocacy coalition with other real estate groups. “We also partner with local higher education institutions, including DePaul University, Roosevelt University, and John Marshall Law School, to create education, scholarships, and programs to serve our members and the greater real estate community,” says Downs, who has served on the boards of all three organizations.

Community outreach for Downs extends beyond the real estate industry to charitable

causes and initiatives, most notably fighting homelessness.

“The idea of not having a home to go to each day or not knowing where your next meal would come from always motivated me to share what I have with others less fortunate,” she says. “I actively began working on fighting homelessness in the 1970s when I lived in San Francisco. A few years after moving to Chicago, past CAR President John Vranas introduced me to The Emergency Fund, whose mission was to prevent homelessness, and I began serving on its board of directors.” Later, Downs helped facilitate a merger between this organization and the Chicago Alliance, which combines immediate resources with long-term strategies

to address the complex issue of homelessness. She served for two years as the president of the new organization, All Chicago – Making Homelessness History, which administers more than \$60 million in HUD funding, runs homelessness programs, and does

research on various aspects of homelessness. “The Chicago association’s board of directors is committed to continuing this work after I leave the organization, and for that, I am eternally grateful.”

The search is already underway for Downs’ replacement at CAR. “I’m doing everything I can to leave a solid organizational foundation for the next CEO,” she says.

Although Downs will leave CAR, she is not leaving the industry. As a consultant, she hopes to put her expertise to work helping other REALTOR® associations with a wide variety of challenges.



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