

# Looking Ahead: Future Trends and Their Implications on the Association Community

---

**Velma R. Hart, CAE**  
**CFO, AMVETS National Headquarters**  
**Chairman, ASAE Board of Directors**



# Trends Impacting Associations

## Short Term

- Economic pressures
- Political landscape

## Long Term

- Mass customization
- Social networking
- Changing demographics



# Business Conditions for Assn Members

- Association professionals now more optimistic
- Majority feel employment situation will improve
- Employers are holding back on paying dues
- Increased number of respondents more likely to drop their membership
- Business travel has been cut
- Online meetings gain in popularity



# Business Conditions for Assn Executives

- Optimism Rises among Association Executives
- Overall, revenues projected to increase in the coming year
- Fewer fear membership decrease
- Revenue from multi-day events expected to increase as association professionals increase travel and meeting attendance



# Advocacy Issues

- Health care reform
- Tax issues
- Nonprofit tax proposals at state level
- Form 990/Nonprofit governance
- New rules for lobbying the administration
- Scrutiny of business trips/meetings



# [www.ThePowerOfA.org](http://www.ThePowerOfA.org)

Associations Working Together is The Power of A

[» Contact Us](#) [» FAQ](#) [» Commenting Policy](#) [» Privacy Policy](#)

( **PROGRESS** )<sup>A</sup>  
The Power of A

 

[Home](#) | [The Power of A in Action](#) | [Participants](#) | [Social Media Room](#) | [Power Words](#)

RSS

[SHARE](#)

Print



John H. Graham IV, CAE  
President & CEO, ASAE

Associations are pioneers of collaborative problem solving, what we call The Power of A. In that spirit, ASAE created this site to stimulate discussion among association leaders, policymakers & other stakeholders, so that the best and brightest ideas can be shared & help resolve issues of importance. Please join in our conversation. Every voice is welcomed. Every opinion valued. Every solution in sight. Thank you.

## Join the Conversation

Help us share The Power of A with all Americans. Watch for dialog that sparks an idea, help someone solve a problem or offer up your best business practices. We all hold the key to resolving the nation's most pressing issues. Let's do it together today.

[Submit a Blog Post »](#)

[Add Your Association »](#)

**THE QUESTION: HOW DOES YOUR ASSOCIATION MOVE THE COUNTRY TOWARD ECONOMIC RECOVERY?**

**We Asked Our Members, Here are Their Responses:**

## RECENT POSTS

[American Hospital Association Solutions, Inc.](#)

[Refrigeration Service Engineers](#)

(SERVICE)<sup>A</sup>



# Mass Customization

- Association members are expecting custom-tailored products and services to meet their diverse and ever-changing needs.
- Consumers expect to get precisely what they want, when they want it.



# Social Networking

- Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr and mobile technology are transforming the way communities are forming and, thus, challenging the association model.
- To maintain their traditional strength as community builders, associations must offer virtual connections while continuing to offer personal experiences.



# Changing Demographics

- Three generations in the workforce (Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennials).
- Decreasing pool of senior managers over next 10-15 years.
- With changing demographics, managing diversity is key to future relevance and success.



# Association of the Future (AOTF)

- 29 young professionals working on AOTF
- Designed to engage assn professionals to assess and respond to challenges and opportunities facing associations
- Working in virtual space and in person during key ASAE & The Center events
- [www.asaecenter.org/AOTF](http://www.asaecenter.org/AOTF)



# Industry Research

- New research initiative launched to determine the economic significance of meetings in the U.S.
- We hope results will underline importance of our sector in the eyes of key audiences
- Quality of data gathered directly impacts our ability to qualify and quantify our sector



# Associations Must . . .

- Exhibit leadership
- Stay focused and make smart decisions
- Maintain core programs and services
- Balance the budget under new assumptions
- Show value of membership
- Embrace new marketing techniques
- Get more out of the same (or fewer) resources

# Exhibiting Leadership

- Ensure communication with Board, staff, and, as appropriate, members
- Maintain clarity of mission and vision
- Be open to ideas and information coming from diverse sources
- Remember, “Action speaks louder than words”



# So, what to do?

*advice from Glenn Tecker, Tecker Consultants*

1. Identify programs that serve most important needs of members
2. Focus on the core — purpose, mission and members
3. Be a source of things members can't otherwise afford
4. Be a source of stability
5. Up to date fiscal strategy
6. Prepare to help members prepare for the next upturn
7. Don't panic — be strategic



# Strategy & Focus

*Determining the right things to do*

- Manage the present, position for the future
- Assess the situation
- Determining relative value and priorities



# Assessing the Budget

- Evaluate progress to date, and adjust revenue projections for the rest of the current fiscal year
  - *Tip: Also complete a cash flow analysis!*
- Identify potential cost savings during the current fiscal year
- Report findings to Board and/or staff and adjust budget accordingly



# Positioning Your Value

- Be sensitive to the members' perspective
- Communicate as often as needed
- Focus on how you can help
- Show immediate value whenever possible



# Marketing

- Use data to effectively reach your market
- Ensure quality of marketing lists
- Cross-market, with a variety of value propositions
- Embrace W.O.M., Social Media and PR
- Consider getting professional help



# Association Management Resources

- **Acronym & Associapedia** – ASAE & The Center's association management blog and wiki
- **Blogoclump.com** – independent views from two dozen association community bloggers
- **ASAE & The Center Video Library** – association industry executives and thought leaders sharing insights, tips and best practices in a short video format



# Brand/Positioning Changes at ASAE

- ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership Boards approved a name change for the organization
- ASAE, with a tag line “The Center for Association Leadership”
- The current 501(c)3 entity will become the ASAE Foundation, with a tag line “Advancing Association and Nonprofit Leadership”



## In closing...

- **Do the right things.**
- **Do things right the first time.**
  - Don't reinvent the wheel if it's not needed
  - Get the facts
  - Ask someone who's done it
  - Consider professional help



